241.54
Se 66t E

THE GENERAL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY LIBRARY

CHELSEA SQUARE, NEW YORK II, N. Y.

D & T ... JUN 9 '58

"FATHER JOHN."

THOUGHTS AND COUNSELS

OF

FATHER JOHN

SELECTED AND ARRANGED FROM

"MY LIFE IN CHRIST"

BY

CYRIL BICKERSTETH, M.A.

Of the Community of the Resurrection

AND

AGNES L. ILLINGWORTH

A. R. MOWBRAY & CO.

OXFORD: S. ALDATES STREET

LONDON: FARRINGDON STREET, E.C.

241.54
Se66t E
84940

First Edition, April, 1899.

Reprinted, March, 1900.

CONTENTS.

PAGE

Introduction xi

CHAPTER I.

GOD AND CREATION.

§ 1. The Holy Trinity 1
§ 2. The Incarnation of the Eternal Word . 8
§ 3. God the Holy Ghost 18
§ 4. The Spiritual Message of the Natural World 26
§ 5. Man and his Maker 44

CHAPTER II.

PRAYER.

§ 1. The Spirit of Prayer 52
§ 2. Faith in Prayer 59
§ 3. Humility in Prayer 66
§ 4. Sincerity in Prayer 70

PAGE

§ 5. Perseverance in Prayer . . . 79
§ 6. Hindrances to Prayer 85
§ 7. Intercession 92
§ 8. Thanksgiving and Spiritual Joy . . 100

CHAPTER III.

THE TEMPLE AND ITS SERVICES.

§ 1. The House of God 112
§ 2. Symbolism 117
§ 3. The Divine Liturgy 123
§ 4. Preparation for Holy Communion . 134
§ 5. The Fruit of a Good Communion . . 141
§ 6. The Duty of Public Worship . . 147
§ 7. The Word of God 152
§ 8. Rites and Customs of the Church . 155

CHAPTER IV.

THE LIFE AND WORK OF A PRIEST.

§ 1. The Dignity of the Priest's Office . . 164
§ 2. The Celebration of the Divine Liturgy . 172
§ 3. The Priest saying the Divine Office . 178
§ 4. The Priest hearing Confessions . . 185
§ 5. The Priest as Preacher, and Pastor of his Flock 192
§ 6. The Priest in Intercession . . . 202

CHAPTER V.

PENITENCE.

PAGE

§ 1. Self-Examination 208
§ 2. Pride 214
§ 3. Malice 219
§ 4. Sins of the Flesh 224
§ 5. Contrition 230
§ 6. Confession 234
§ 7. Amendment of Life 240
§ 8. Fasting 246

CHAPTER VI.

TEMPTATION AND VICTORY.

§ 1. The Tempter 261
§ 2. The Perils of Ease 266
§ 3. Sickness and Poverty 273
§ 4. Desolation 280
§ 5. The Spiritual Combat 287
§ 6. The Triumph of Grace 295

CHAPTER VII.

THE PURSUIT OF HOLINESS.

§ 1. The Ordering of the Daily Life . . 299
§ 2. The Education of the Mind . . . 311

PAGE

§ 3. The Education of the Spirit . . . 318
§ 4. Humility 326
§ 5. Love and Forgiveness 335
§ 6. Almsgiving 343
§ 7. Trust in God 349

CHAPTER VIII.

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS, AND THE LIFE EVERLASTING.

§ 1. Fellow-citizens with the Saints . . 353
§ 2. Imitation of the Saints 368
§ 3. Death and Eternity 373
§ 4. Union with God 381

INTRODUCTION.

THE larger work from which this little book is taken is the English translation by Colonel Goulaeff of "My Life in Christ" by Father John Sergieff, which was published by Messrs. Cassell in 1897.

It was felt by many, who became acquainted with the rich stores of spiritual wisdom which it contains, that such edifying thoughts should be presented to the Christian reader in a more accessible shape; for the size of the original volume, and a certain lack of order and arrangement, have prevented it from having the circulation which its conspicuous merits deserve. Colonel Goulaeff and Father John readily gave the required permission, and it has been the happiness of the present editors carefully to weigh the whole work and select the passages which seemed most likely to interest and edify the sons and daughters of the English Church. We have arranged the passages under certain obvious heads which are sufficiently indicated

by the Table of Contents, and we have added the texts from Holy Scripture. In making our selections we did not feel bound to exclude every expression which we could not reconcile with the doctrinal standards of the Church of England, for it is obvious that no devotional book could fairly express the mind of the Russian Church, if it did not involve more recognition of the Invocation of Saints and the devotional use of "icons" than the Church of England has permitted or encouraged. We feel sure that many who could not use identical language will appreciate that vivid realisation of the unseen world, and that reverence for holy things and places which is so conspicuous a feature in the book; and they will certainly acquit Father John of idolatry or superstition, when they find how his heart and mind are possessed with the thought of the Majesty and the Immanence of God.

Thus, when Father John bids us "pray before the icon of the Saviour as before Himself" he can justify the practice by an argument which is both reasonable and devout—"The Lover of men is present in it by His grace, and with the eyes depicted in it really looks at you, for the eyes of the Lord are in every place."

Before attempting to call attention to the special characteristics of his writings something must be said about the man himself.

Colonel Goulaeff quotes from the *Times* of January 13th, 1891, an account of an extraordinary festival which was held to celebrate the thirty-fifth anniversary of his entry into the orthodox ministry:

"This wonderful man in the midst of his Russian surroundings seems to approach in these days to the first Apostles. He is indeed a true physician of the Gospel. His extraordinary healing powers, and the spiritual and bodily cures effected by the faithful acceptance of his earnest consolations are attested on all sides by many sorts and conditions of men. To those who believe in Father John—and their name is legion—the age of miracles is not yet over. Crowds press round him whenever he leaves his humble abode, and are happy if they can touch the hem of his modest garb. Father John's life is one of uninterrupted and self-sacrificing charity and Christian ministration among the poor, the sick, and the needy; not, however, refusing his presence and prayers to the well-to-do and rich, who send for him when other help fails, and never in vain, from all parts of the country. . . . Although enormous sums of money have passed through his hands to the Russian poor in all directions, he is still a poor man, living in the humblest possible way

"Steamboats and trains, in which he journeys to and fro on his truly Christian work, are

besieged with such crowds that the police have to protect him from their pressure.

"The report of his appearance in any house in S. Petersburg—and the news spreads like wild-fire—brings throngs of poor people, running madly from all the surrounding streets, to get within the range of his healing presence, to receive his blessing, or to implore his attendance at the sick-bed of relatives or friends."

This extraordinary influence with all sorts of people in Russia has been thus explained by an English traveller who enjoys the privilege of his friendship :

"The real fact is that Father John is a great mystery. No one knows exactly how his great reputation was first made or when it all began. I think that, wonderful as are the stories about him and the way his prayers are answered, his extraordinary influence in Russia rests less upon this than upon the fact that he represents the ideal which has formed itself in the minds of orthodox Russians as to what a priest ought to be. He is a most beautiful man in every way: perfectly simple and natural, and free from cant: spending his whole life doing good, just taking things as they come from day to day, and bringing sorrow for sin, brightness, and peace with him wherever he goes."

We are indebted to an English lady, who has lived in Russia all her life, for the following

extract from a Russian pamphlet and some personal reminiscences of the man and his work.

In the year 1888 Father John was "interviewed" by the editor of a Russian journal, and communicated to him the following facts:

"I was born in the government of Archangel, in the parochial village of Sourovski in the year 1829. My father was a deacon. Unprepared, and hardly knowing how to read, I entered at the age of ten, as paying pupil, the parish school in Archangel. It was stiff work for me to learn; having nobody to coach or help me, I had to plod on by my own efforts, and it was no little sorrow that my slow intelligence caused me. From my earliest childhood I was brought up piously, my father and mother teaching me by precept and example to pray. And I loved prayer—I loved the Church services, and especially good singing. Whilst sorrowing for lack of progress in my studies, I prayed earnestly to God, that He would give me wisdom, and I can remember how suddenly there passed, as it were, a cloud from my brain, and my comprehension seemed to become clearer, and day by day, as I grew older, my proficiency increased, so that from the last I became the first scholar. This progress continued increasing in the seminary likewise, where I finished my course as first student in 1851, and was thence transferred at Government cost to the Theological Academy in

S. Petersburg. At that time in the Academy the post of registrar was filled by students for the small pay of about ten silver roubles (32*s.*) a month. Having a widowed mother who wanted my assistance, I gladly accepted this post which had been kindly offered to me. In the year 1855, having passed my theological examination I went as priest to Cronstadt, having been married to Elisabeth, daughter of the local Archpresbyter, K. P. Nevitzki.[1] Children we have never had. From the first days of my office in the sublime service of God's Church, I made it my life's rule to be faithful and zealous in my work, strictly to watch over myself and my spiritual life. To help me in this purpose, I began to study the Holy Bible, deriving therefrom edification as man, as priest, and as a member of society in general. It was at this time that I began my Diary, in which I noted down all my struggles, with my thoughts, my temptations, all my repentances, my secret prayers, my thanksgivings. Every Sunday and holy day I preached a sermon or held a discourse in church, either my own or one of Bishop Gregory's sermons. Some of my discourses are published, but a great many are in manuscript. Besides my official, church duties, from the very commencement,

[1] In Russia, all priests of the secular order—*i.e.* parish priests, and all who are not monastic—must be married before ordination.

having been poor myself, I have cared for the poor; and about twenty years ago (*i.e.* in 1868) I originated the thought of establishing in Cronstadt a 'House of Industry,' which God helped me to accomplish in the year 1873! and this is all."

Here the interview ended; but the little pamphlet goes on to give some statistics which prove that he expends wisely and practically 100,000 silver roubles (£15,000) yearly in numerous charities, of which 50,000 are in Cronstadt. At present he is Archpriest of S. Andrew's Cathedral in Cronstadt. Our Russian correspondent continues: "His spiritual life was no sudden outburst of miraculous power (as the ignorant Russians in their enthusiasm liked to proclaim, to his great vexation), but it was the 'gradual outcome of past years, a steady growth from the time when he first loved prayer and the word of God. His great influence for good on all around proceeds from his unbounded sympathy and love for humanity at large, recognising in all the brother or sister for whom Christ was willing to die. His adherence to the rules and spirit of orthodoxy is perfect, and he is recognised and appreciated by all the priesthood and by the highest in Church and State."

A proof of this is found in the fact that when the late Emperor Alexander III. was dying, Father John was summoned to him in the Crimea

and was with him till he died. We take from Colonel Goulaeff's introduction the letter which Father John wrote to the *S. Petersburg Church News* giving an account of this memorable occasion:

"On the 17th of October, 1894, in accordance with the deceased Emperor's desire, I administered the Holy Sacrament to his Imperial Majesty. On those sorrowful days I performed the Liturgy daily, either at the palace church of Livadia, or at the church of Oryanda; and on the day named, just after the celebration of Divine service, I came to the august invalid from the last-named church with the Cup of Life. He partook of the life-giving Holy Sacrament from my hands with deep devotion. On the 20th of October his Imperial Majesty wished to see me again. I hastened to go to him immediately after the celebration of the Liturgy, and remained in his presence until the moment of his peaceful death. By the wish of the Empress, I read the prayer for healing the patient, and anointed him with oil taken from the lamp that burns before a deeply venerated thaumaturgical icon, and supplied by the Reverend Father Alexander of Yalta, by the wish of some pious persons, for the purpose of anointing the august invalid, which ceremony was duly performed. Having received this anointing with sincere faith, the Emperor ex-

pressed the wish that I should lay my hands on his head, and when I had done so, his Majesty said to me: 'The people love you.' 'Yes,' I answered, 'your people love me.' Then the Emperor was pleased to say: 'Yes, because they know who you are and what you are.' (His exact words.) Soon afterwards the august patient began to feel some very oppressive fits of asthma, and oxygen was constantly introduced into his mouth. He suffered severely. On his left side was the Empress, before him stood his two elder sons and the bride elect, on his right side the younger children, the Grand Duke Michael, and the Grand Duchess Olga, whilst at the head of the arm-chair I myself stood. 'Is it not oppressive to Your Imperial Majesty when I hold my hand on your head?' asked I. 'No,' the emperor was pleased to answer. 'I feel better when you hold your hands over me.' I replied: 'That is because I came directly after the celebration of the Liturgy, carried the most pure Body of Christ in these same hands, and was myself a partaker of the Holy Sacrament.'"

It is interesting to know on good authority that the present Emperor is very fond of Father John, and asked him to be one of his court chaplains, but he refused. He was at the coronation, and at the banquet to the clergy sat next to Bishop Creighton.

The same Russian correspondent to whom we are so much indebted gives an account of her first meeting with Father John, when he came to the deathbed of a near neighbour:

"A dear good old lady of about seventy, who was bedridden, yet clung to life with great tenacity through nervous fear of death. She had all her life been afraid to look at a corpse or attend a funeral. In her anxiety she begged her son to send for Father John, hoping life would be prolonged to her in answer to his prayers. He came directly he was called, entered her room with a cheerful greeting, and a kind pleasant smile. 'Well, N—— W——!' making the sign of the cross over her, 'I bring you God's blessing. How do you feel?' The old lady began with peevish voice her long complaints. He listened attentively, as he always does; for he is a very good listener, and, by his calm, patient manner, calms the speaker and all around him. When she had done he began to question her. How old was she? how long had she lived with her good husband? how many children she had? by what means had they risen and prospered and been a comfort and joy to her, etc., etc.; then, taking her hand, he said: 'Oh, N—— W—— what blessings! what great mercies have been showered upon you! Have you realised it all? Let us thank God, let us praise God with all our heart

and strength.' Then in a beautiful extempore prayer he expatiated on all she had related to him and warmed the hearts of all present, and raised their souls above this world, filling the spirit of the dying woman with gratitude and faith and love; then he continued, 'That is not all that God has done for you. He releases you from the bonds of all your sins, absolves you for Jesus Christ's sake, He has prepared a mansion for you in heaven to be near Him, near all you have loved and parted from awhile.' Before he left, the old lady was calm and reconciled to die, willing only that God's will might be done, and his name praised in life and in death; she only desired that Father John would come again and give her the Holy Communion, which he did although he had to come from Cronstadt. The last few days that followed she was calm and cheerful, talking of going home with perfect peace and gratitude."

There seems to be no doubt that an impression prevails all over Russia that Father John possesses extraordinary supernatural powers of working miracles and healing the sick, and there are well-authenticated instances of very remarkable answers to his prayers, but we find in his diary no trace of what is commonly called "Faith Healing." He does not disparage the office of a doctor or the use of medicine; and clearly recognises that the action of Almighty God alike in

nature and in grace is not irregular and capricious, but normal and incessant. Thus he writes:

"The Lord has full respect for nature which He has created, and for her laws as the product of His own infinite and most perfect wisdom; this is why He usually accomplishes His will through the medium of nature and her laws; for instance when He punishes men or blesses them. Therefore do not require miracles of Him without extreme necessity."

That God should hear and answer prayer is not, in his mind, strictly speaking, miraculous at all, but part of the ordinary operation of His Providence, which is quite familiar to every Christian who really prays.

Throughout "My Life in Christ" there are constant references to prayers which were answered, generally for spiritual mercies, not infrequently for the supply of charitable funds, or the cure of disease. One such instance is recorded in Colonel Goulaeff's introduction:

"In October 1889, in Moscow, in the family of a certain Mr. S—ff, two children fell ill with diphtheria. Nothwithstanding the measures at once taken, the illness developed rapidly and increased. A consultation of doctors was held, and it was decided to resort to tracheotomy. One can imagine the despair of the children's parents. Having lost hope in human aid, they sent a telegram to Father John of Cronstadt,

begging for his prayers. The Reverend Father received this telegram in the morning, at the time when he was performing the early Liturgy, and, as he usually does, immediately after reading the telegram, he addressed his earnest prayer to God. Meanwhile, what was taking place in Moscow? It had been decided to perform the operation of tracheotomy at two o'clock on that day, but already at nine o'clock, a.m. (at the very time of Father John's prayers in Cronstadt, some five hundred miles away), the doctor who remained on duty noticed an improvement, which progressed as rapidly as the illness had previously developed. The doctors, having assembled at the appointed time of two o'clock p.m., found such certain improvement in the condition of the children that the operation was pronounced unnecessary. In three to four days both children completely recovered."

It is not necessary to discuss here at length the question of the efficacy of prayer, for the reader will find in Chapter II. abundant evidence that Father John differs from ordinary Christians only in the intensity of his conviction that it is worth while to act upon the promise of our Lord—"Ask and it shall be given unto you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you."[1] It is no new doctrine that

[1] S. Matt. vii. 7.

"the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."[1]

If it is contrary to ordinary experience that prayer avails to heal the sick, when all natural means are tried in vain, it is not contrary to the experience of the saints; and many believers, who are conscious of their distance from the saints, have sufficient experience of their own to assure them that there is nothing incredible in such a result following such an exercise of spiritual power.

The moral and spiritual miracles—the recovery of souls dead in trespasses and sins—are even more remarkable. Let one such suffice, for it is a specimen of Father John's ordinary dealing with souls, who are brought within his reach.

The same correspondent vouches for the fact that, "Once an inveterate drunkard, who from early morning till late at night was constantly reeling in the streets, tattered and torn, bruised and soiled, a repulsive sight, mixed with the crowd waiting at the pier, where stood Father John's little private steamboat[2] ready to take him to Cronstadt. The Father came; his eye fell on the miserable spectacle, and he said to him

[1] S. James v. 16.

[2] The gift of some grateful heart, who wished to secure him a quiet passage, which in the public boats was impossible, as the crowds throng round him wherever he appears.

in passing: 'Come along with me and we can have a talk.' The surprised delinquent moved automatically. 'Here, sit down beside me and tell me how you have fallen so low, so very low.' Almost involuntarily the poor fellow began to talk and talk, and was led to relate all his wicked life, and hot tears coursed down his cheeks. 'See, brother,' said the priest, 'how good, how merciful our Heavenly Father is, to have led you through all this disgrace, shame, and wretchedness, to the foot of the Cross; now, throw off the past, begin a new life, for we must all live for the glory of God; every tiny blade of grass glorifies God in its usefulness and beauty; every breathing thing glorifies God by its love and God-blended will; and you a man, father of a family, with workmen working by your order, have forgotten this—yes, you have forgotten God and prevented others glorifying Him. For, man, to be mean-spirited is a far greater misery than any other form of want. In threadbare clothes may walk a brave, light heart, ever reaching to a higher life; but a beggar in spirit, no earthly treasure can enrich or save.' 'Father, I did not mean to ask you for material help, I only beseech you to cure me of my besetting sin: save me from my craving for drink.' 'Heal your soul by loving God and your neighbour; fill your heart with faith and love, and the other cure will come of itself. "Seek first the kingdom of God, and all the

rest will be added unto you!" Cling to God and strive to obey the teaching of 'His Holy Church."' So they conversed until the poor fallen man felt that there was a noble aim even for him, to which he could attain by prayer and striving.

"'We are approaching Cronstadt,' said the Father. 'Here is wherewith to get a night's lodging' (putting a handful of paper money into his hand) 'and to buy decent clothes—you cannot come in these. Then come to Church tomorrow morning, let us pray together—confess your sins, obtain absolution, partake of the cup of salvation; then go home rejoicing, and never, never fall into your ugly sins again.'"[1]

Such sudden conversions may be few and far between, and such a sudden restoration to means of grace so long forsaken may be dangerous or unwise, but the sympathy and faith which Father John exhibits are often accompanied with a spiritual insight which dispenses with the ordinary calculations of prudence. It is like the case of the impotent man at Lystra, to whom S. Paul," steadfastly beholding him and perceiving that he had faith to be healed, said with a loud voice, Stand upright on Thy feet. And he leaped and walked."[2]

[1] N.B.—He never did. He is still living as a respectable man, Dec. 1898.

[2] Acts xiv. 9, 10.

We trust that enough has been said, by way of introduction, as to the life and work of Father John; for the selections from his diary which follow have about them that ring of absolute sincerity, which makes one conscious of reading the very heart of the man whose words they are.

The careful weighing of his words and the effort to select passages of special interest have impressed on our minds three prominent characteristics of Father John and his teaching.

1. There is the vivid realisation of the communion of saints and the nearness of the spiritual world, which is specially noticeable in Chapter VIII., but which runs throughout the whole.

2. There is the love of nature and the openness to receive what we have called "the spiritual message of the natural world." In this Father John reminds us of S. Francis of Assisi and our own John Keble, whose *Christian Year* has taught us to connect with the fullest recognition of the Divine presence the keenest delight in the varied loveliness of earth and sky and sea.

3. There is above all the confident appeal to experience. When Father John is speaking of the joys of a good communion and the sense of the Divine presence which fills the heart, we feel he is speaking with the assured conviction of a man who has tasted that the Lord is gracious.

He is equally emphatic and sincere in adding "This is from experience" when he tells us how malice or intemperance in meat and drink darken the heart and render the soul incapable of prayer.

An English reader can hardly fail to be struck with the unsparing and reiterated rebuke of intemperance in eating and drinking, in which is included a reminder that "tea and coffee also pertain to drunkenness if indulged in unreasonably and to excess."

If Father John is rigorous in his teaching about fasting, as a positive duty enjoined by our Lord and the Church, and as an indispensable condition of a vigorous and healthy spiritual life, there is no touch of false asceticism. He exhibits the brightness and spiritual elation of one who has exchanged the tyranny of carnal appetite and the fetters of the world for the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

It only remains to express our gratitude to Colonel Goulaeff and Father John himself for allowing us to make such free use of their most valuable work. We have not exhausted its beauties, and we trust that those who appreciate our selections will explore the quarry from which they are hewn.

The work of selection has been mainly done by Mrs. J. R. Illingworth, who was with my

brother, the Rev. Walter Frere, the joint compiler of "Sursum Corda."

We are deeply indebted to Miss Matilda Raine of S. Petersburg and to Mr. W. J. Birkbeck for the information additional to that which is contained in Colonel Goulaeff's preface, to Canon Gore, and others of the brethren of the Community of the Resurrection for suggestions and encouragement.

CYRIL BICKERSTETH.

THOUGHTS AND COUNSELS

OF

FATHER JOHN

CHAPTER I.

GOD AND CREATION.

§ 1. The Holy Trinity.

God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.—S. John iv. 24.

God is a spiritual Being from Whom everything has received its existence, and without Whom nothing can be imagined; in Whom everything has its origin, continuation, life, and preservation; Who is infinitely greater than any time and space; Who never had either beginning or ending; before Whom everything is as though it did not exist; Who is wholly everywhere; Who is not restricted either by any space or any atom, nor mountain, nor heavenly body, nor sea,

nor air, nor fire, nor earth; Who Himself eternally fills all space, and Who Himself by His Power keeps in existence everything that exists; Who is in every place, in every unimaginable point of space, and Himself unlimitedly contains every space—in a word, God is that Which Is, that is to say, as it were, alone existing, the One Who Is.

When the matter relates to God's mysteries, do not inwardly ask: How can this be? You do not know how God created the whole world from nothing; you cannot and may not know here either how God mysteriously works. God's mystery must remain a mystery for you, because you are not God, and cannot know all that is known to the eternally Wise, Almighty God. You are the work of His hands, His most insignificant creature. Remember that there was a time when there was nothing, and that afterwards all that now exists was created out of nothing by the Word of God. "Without Him was not any thing made that was made."[1]

When you pronounce to yourself in your heart the name of God, of the Lord, or that of the most Holy Trinity, or of the Lord God of Sabbaoth, or of the Lord Jesus Christ, then in that Name you have the Lord's whole being: in it is His infinite mercy, His boundless wisdom, His inaccessible light, omnipotence, and immuta-

[1] S. John i. 3

bility. Approach this all-creative, all-keeping, and all-ruling Name in your thoughts and heart with the fear of God, and with faith and love. This is why God's commandment strictly forbids us to use God's name in vain, because His Name is Himself, One God in Three Persons, an incomplex Being, represented and contained in one single word, although at the same time He is not contained or limited either by it or by anything that exists.

The great names, the Most Holy Trinity, or the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, called upon with lively, hearty faith and reverence, or thought of in the soul, are God Himself, and bring into our soul God Himself in Three Persons. But of God, "and through Him, and to Him, are all things:"[1] therefore, if you are united to God the Trinity by lively faith and virtue, especially by meekness, humility, and mercy, ask of Him whatever you desire, whatever the Holy Ghost teaches you to ask, and it shall be given unto you, either quickly, in a moment, in an hour, or after some time, according to the judgment of God's great wisdom. "Desire of Me, and I shall give thee."[2] Everything that you ask for is certainly less, infinitely less, than the Giver Himself, as it derives its existence from Him. And, as the Giver Himself is an infinite, incomplex Being, and can in some manner be comprised in one single word, then believe

[1] Rom. xi. 36. [2] Psalm ii. 8.

that one single word of yours, one single petition concerning the fulfilment of anything, can at a sign from the Lord immediately become a thing or a deed. "He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast."[1] Remember the wonders that Moses worked, remember how that man of God was a god to Pharaoh, and how instantaneously at his word, or at a movement of his hand, or of his staff, everything either changed or appeared. O great God, most glorified God, God of wonders, God of unspeakable mercy, bountifulness, and love to man, glory to Thee always, both now and for ever, and unto ages of ages! Amen.

When we speak of the God of glory, of His will, of His law, then we must entirely forget our own glory and be completely absorbed in the contemplation of the glory of God or of His most wise, all-gracious will. At such times we should not think of our own imperfection, which the Devil puts into our mind and feeling in order to lower us in our own eyes and to plunge us into false shame, despondency, and despair. We must remember that there is no perfection in anything upon earth, nor in any earthly glory: "For we know in part, and we prophesy [preach] in part."[2] And he who is ashamed and blushes for his imperfection is ashamed of a phantom, appearing to him in his own imagination, and is proud of his imaginary perfections.

[1] Psalm xxxiii. 9. [2] 1 Cor. xiii. 9.

Those who do not believe in God's omnipresence in their thoughts and hearts depreciate the power of God, do not ascribe to Him even that property which air possesses, for air is everywhere. Is not the Creator of the air everywhere? Unbelief in God's omnipresence—or, in general, any sin—serves itself as a strong proof that He is everywhere present. Thus at the time of unbelief my heart is straitened, experiences a kind of burning sensation; it is weary and tormented; my mind is darkened, and I am in a state of desolation. But when I believe, with lively faith, that God is everywhere, present in every place, and therefore that He is ever with me and within me, my heart expands; it is free, light, alive, and my mind is clear—I am in a joyful state. Thus the very thing which slays me serves as the most striking proof of the existence of that in which I was doubting. Unbelief torments me, because it is a calumny of my own heart or of the evil spirit against God, Who is my life. The mental denial by my free soul of life itself is naturally and rightly its death. Again, God is a thinking Being, and my soul is also a thinking being derived from the first thought; therefore my intercourse with God takes place through thought, through faith of the heart, which is nothing else but a lively and clear thought that God is in every place. When I have no such thought it signifies that I have the opposite negative one; when the principle that unites my soul to God

is cut off, then there is no true life for me, and there only remains the phantom of an outward, false, animal life.

What is the name of our God? Love, Mercy, Compassion, Bountifulness. When you pray, contemplate with the eyes of your heart Love and Mercy standing before you,—the Lover of men listening to you.

Lord! Thy name is Love: do not cast me away, erring as I am! Thy name is Power: strengthen me, who so often grow weak and fall! Thy name is Light: enlighten my soul, darkened by earthly passions! Thy name is Peace: appease my troubled soul! Thy name is Mercy: do not cease to forgive me!

Your Lord is love: love Him and in Him all men, as His children in Christ. Your Lord is a fire: do not let your heart be cold, but burn with faith and love. Your Lord is light: do not walk in darkness and do not do anything in darkness of mind, without reasoning or understanding, or without faith. Your Lord is a God of mercy and bountifulness: be also a source of mercy and bountifulness to your neighbours. If you will be such, you will find salvation yourself with everlasting glory.

Say inwardly, from your whole heart: "The Lord is everything to me; I myself am nothing; I am powerless, I am infirm." "For without

Me ye can do nothing,"[1] says the Lord Himself, for it might be added: "I am everything to you." Be heartily convinced of this every moment of your life, and have recourse to the Lord absolutely in everything, trusting to obtain from Him everything necessary for your salvation, and even for this temporal life besides.

When you call in prayer upon the Lord God in Three Persons, remember that you are calling upon the unoriginate Father of all creatures, angels, and men; that all the heavenly Powers are in wonderment at you as you call upon Him, and look lovingly upon you that you are able to call with faith, love, and becoming reverence upon our and their common Father, the Almighty, Creator and Lord, Whom they love boundlessly, Whom they reverence deeply. Oh, what power and sovereignty are especially manifested when He converts a sinful man into a holy chosen vessel after he had terribly fallen; when He restores, raises, and renews the depraved; when He gives life to the man who was dead in soul and body, and leads into eternal life him who had fallen into eternal death.

O Holy Trinity, our God! incomplex Being, Who hath created our souls also after Thine image, grant that we may have life and peace in Thee! O Holy Trinity, our Nourisher and Hope! grant that we may ever put our trust

[1] S. John xv. 5.

in Thee alone, and ever find life and peace in Thee alone! Thou carriest us all, like a mother, in Thine arms, and feedest us all from Thy hands, like the most tender mother! Thou never forgettest us, and wilt never forget us, for Thou Thyself hast said: "Can a woman forget her sucking child? . . . yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee." [1]

§ 2. The Incarnation of the Eternal Word.

The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.—S. John i. 14.

This is indeed the miracle of miracles; this reveals the infinite mercy, wisdom, and omnipotence of the Lord in relation to His creatures that He Himself, the Lord of all creatures, the infinite, the uncontainable, was pleased and was able to become man for our salvation, and that "the Word (by whom all things were made) was made flesh, and dwelt among us," [2] living with men and being like unto man in everything, except sin. "The heavens were in awe, and the ends of the earth were astonished, that God appeared as man in the flesh." [3] He conversed with men, loaded us with benefits, worked innumerable miracles, suffered (O wonder!), died (O awful wonder!), and rose again, raising with Himself us also, who were dead in Adam! I glorify Thy most merciful, holy, almighty, and

[1] Isa. xlix. 15. [2] S. John i. 14.

[3] Canon of the 8th tone, Hymn 9.

most wise power, Lord! Show upon me, also, Lord, Thy wonderful power, and, by ways known unto Thee, save me, Thine unworthy servant, disregarding my trespasses, voluntary and involuntary, committed in knowledge or ignorance, guiding me ever in Thy way, and strengthening me upon this way by Thy grace, and through me the others for whom Thou hast placed me as a light, shepherd, teacher, and priest.

The Lord, before His incarnation, let mankind experience all the bitterness of sin, all their powerlessness to eradicate it; and when all longed for a Deliverer, then He appeared, the most wise, all-powerful Physician and Helper. When men hungered and thirsted after righteousness, as it grew weaker, then the everlasting righteousness came.

From what deep sores, from what mortal wounds, from what deathly breathing of sin, did the Heavenly Physician, our Lord Jesus Christ, come to save us? Who can fully understand this? Nobody. Only in part, from our own experience, some of us see the depths of the abyss into which we have fallen through sin—all our powerlessness for good, all the power and abyss of the evil or sin nestling in our hearts. But even to see this is granted unto us by the grace of God, enlightening our darkened hearts. A man does not see this by his natural understanding, and therefore he cannot see and

feel the necessity of amendment, and have strength for such amendment and renewal.

Christ "came upon earth in order to raise us up to heaven."[1] Do we aspire to the realisation of the object of our beloved Saviour's coming upon earth? Do we meditate upon heavenly things? Do we long for the heavenly kingdom? Let us ask ourselves these questions, and answer them more frequently. Do we sufficiently value the Saviour's teaching and preaching, His sufferings and death? Do we not trample upon His whole edifice by clinging to earthly instead of heavenly things? Yea, Lord.

I am morally nothing without the Lord. I have really not one true thought or good feeling, and can do no good works; without Him I cannot drive away from me any sinful thought, any passionate feeling such as malice, envy, fornication, pride, etc. The Lord is the accomplishment of everything good that I think, feel, and do. Oh, how boundlessly wide is the Lord's grace acting in me! The Lord is everything to me, and so clearly, so constantly. Mine—is only my sinfulness; mine—are only mine infirmities. Oh, how we ought to love our Lord, Who was pleased to call us into existence from non-existence, to honour us by His image and likeness, to establish us in a paradise of delights,

[1] Acathistos to the Sweetest Lord Jesus.

to subdue all the earth unto us, and Who—when we did not keep His commandments, but were allured by the enticement of the Devil, and immeasurably offended our Creator by our ingratitude, and assimilated unto ourselves all the qualities of the tempter (pride, malice, envy, ingratitude) and all his evil arts, which he taught us as his prisoners—did not reject us for ever, but deigned to redeem us from sin, from the curse and death into which we had fallen through sin, and Himself appeared upon earth, having taken our nature upon Him; He Himself became my Teacher, my Healer, my Worker of miracles, my Saviour; He Himself bore the punishment for us, died for us in order that we should not be eternally lost. He rose from the dead, in order to raise us too after death. He ascended into heaven, in order that we, too, should ascend, we who had fallen so low through sin; and He became everything to us—food, drink, light, purification, sanctification, health and the power that protects, saves, preserves, and has mercy upon us.

Looking upon the Saviour's Cross, contemplate Love, crucified upon it for our salvation; and think for what blessedness He has saved us, and from what torments He has redeemed us! He has snatched us from the jaws of the beast and has brought us to the Father! O love! O redemption! O terrors of everlasting torments! O indescribable, endless blessedness!

The love of our Divine Saviour, Jesus Christ, of God the Father, and of the Holy Ghost to us is so great, so immeasurable, that, in comparison to it, all human dislike, enmity, and hatred against us become insignificant, and seem to vanish entirely. It is because of this boundlessness of God's love to us and the insignificance of human enmity that the Saviour commanded us all to love our enemies, bless them that curse us, do good to them that hate us, and pray for them which despitefully use and persecute us.[1] We are in the love of God; does it greatly matter to us if men are not well disposed towards us? What can they do against us when God has so loved us?

How many benefits has my faith in Christ brought me until now? Without speaking of innumerable other benefits, I will mention the following ones:—How many disturbances of the soul and passions it has driven away and appeased in me! how many evil inclinations of the heart it has corrected! how many times I was cleansed from my sins and my soul saved from spiritual death! And how near is our Lord unto him who believes! He is like the air, like the breath of our mouth, like the breathing of our heart, of our soul.

I love to gaze upon the image of the risen Life-giver with the banner in His hand, with that

[1] S. Matt. v. 44.

symbol of victory over death and Him Who has the power of death: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"[1] What a glorious Victor! What a cruel, most wicked enemy He has conquered! An enemy who gloried in his victories during thousands of years! "To Thee, Conqueror of death, we cry: Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord."[2] "We glorify Thee, Life-giving Christ, Who descended into hell for our sakes, and didst raise all with Thyself."[3] "In rising from the tomb, Christ, Thou didst raise all the race of Adam with Thyself."[4]

Remember constantly that the light of your soul, of your thoughts, and of your heart, comes from Jesus Christ. He is the "Light of the eye" of our heart—not like the light that comes from the sun, that appears and disappears, and does not penetrate through an opaque substance, but leaves many things in darkness, and cannot enlighten one single soul in the darkness of sin, but He is the "true Light, which lighteth every man" (that is, the principal part of his being, the soul) "that cometh into the world."[5] Yes, the light of Christ enlightens all, even the heathens. "A light to lighten the Gentiles."[6] It shines

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 55.
[2] Troparia at Matins on Palm Sunday.
[3] Glorification at Matins on S. Thomas' Sunday.
[4] Canon at Easter.
[5] S. John i. 9.
[6] S. Luke ii. 32.

even in the darkness of sin, but sinful human darkness, or, rather, the men living in the darkness of sin, do not understand it, comprehend it not;[1] they do not guess that the light which is in their souls is from Christ, and think that it is their own natural light; that they themselves, by means of their natural intellect, their own sagacity and judgment, have attained to a certain truth, have accomplished certain work; they do not think that it is only by the light of Christ that they "see light,"[2] the light of every noble science, of every noble art, and of every thing.

Even here I rest in Christ and with Christ; how, then, can I do otherwise than believe that eternal rest in Him awaits me after death, and after the struggle against earthly enemies? Here without Christ I feel oppressed and in pain; how can I do otherwise than believe that it will be still more grievous to be without Christ there, when He will finally cast me away from before His face! Thus the present state of our souls foreshadows the future. The future will be a continuation of the present inward condition, only in a modified form as to its degree: for the righteous it will be turned into the fulness of eternal glory; for sinners, into the fulness of everlasting torment.

It is incomprehensible how Jesus Christ is

[1] S. John i. 5. [2] Psalm xxxvi. 9.

united with the sign of the Cross, and gives it the wonderful power of driving away passions, and demons, and to calm the troubled soul. It is likewise incomprehensible how the spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ is united with the bread and wine, transforming them into His own Flesh and Blood, and manifestly cleansing our soul from sins, bringing into it heavenly peace and tranquillity and making it good, gentle, humble, and full of hearty faith and hope. This is partly explained by the fact that the Almighty, creating spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ is everywhere, and that everywhere He "calleth those things which be not as though they were";[1] and therefore much more can He make what exists other than what it was. And in order that the unbelieving heart should not think that both the sign of the Cross and the name of Christ act miraculously by themselves, apart from and independently of Christ Himself, this same Cross and name of Christ do not perform any miracles, until I see Jesus Christ with the eyes of my heart, or by faith, and until I believe with my whole heart all that which He has accomplished for our salvation.

"He that spared not His own Son . . . how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"[2] The essential, the greatest is given; everything else that we ask or pray for is infinitely less than the Son of God. We may

[1] Rom. iv. 17. [2] Rom. viii. 32.

therefore ask God for everything trustfully in the name of Jesus Christ, every blessing or gift that we can think of, for "Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."[1] Do you pray for the forgiveness of the sins or for the repose of the souls of the departed? "He is the propitiation . . . for the sins of the whole world."[2] "The Blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin."[3] He can forgive even the departed every sin committed by them in word, deed, or thought. "He is the resurrection, the life and the repose of His departed servants." . . . Would you ask anything of Him for the living and for yourself? "Ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you"[4]

Having Christ in your heart, fear that you may lose Him, and with Him the peace of your heart; it is hard to begin again; efforts to attach oneself afresh to Him after falling away will be very grievous, and will cost bitter tears to many. Cling to Christ with all your might, gain Him and do not lose boldness in approaching Him.

With the mental eyes of my heart, I see how I mentally breathe Christ in my heart, how He enters into it, and suddenly tranquillises and rejoices it. Oh, do not leave me to dwell alone, without Thyself, the life-giver, my breath, my joy! It is hard for me to be left without Thee.

[1] S. John xiv. 13.
[2] 1 S. John ii. 2.
[3] 1 S. John i. 7.
[4] S. John xv. 7.

You, sinner, who have fallen into the depths of evil, when you represent to yourself the multitude of your sins and fall into despair and hardness of heart, remember that the Heavenly Father sent His only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, into the world for your salvation from sins and from eternal condemnation for them. Turn then with faith to this Mediator before God for men, imploring Him from the depths of your soul to wash away by His all-cleansing Blood, shed for us on the cross, your iniquities too; turn zealously to repentance, confessing your sins before His priest as before Himself, that you may be justified; after which, if the minister of the sacrament of penitence finds you prepared and fit, draw nigh to the holy cup and you shall be cleansed of your sins: peace shall flow into your soul like a river, and you shall be the son of the Heavenly Father, who "was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found." [1]

O sweetest name, holiest name, almighty name of our Lord Jesus Christ! My victory, Lord, glory to Thee! Lord, we are Thy members, we are one body, Thou art our Head! Lord, grant that all passions, all demons may flee from us! Lord, bestow upon us the grace of never failing love! Lord, grant that we may show respect and love to each other, as to Thyself, for we are made godly by Thee.

[1] S. Luke xv. 4, 32.

§ 3. God the Holy Ghost.

I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever.—S. John xiv. 16.

The Holy Ghost is called the "Comforter,"[1] in accordance with His nature, which is peace, joy, and infinite blessedness, and also on account of His action upon the souls of believers, whom He comforts like a mother in their virtues, in their sufferings, sorrows, and sicknesses, and in their great deeds for the faith. He is also called the Comforter in contrast to the evil spirit of despondency that often attacks our souls. Every phenomenon has its cause. Thus having done any good action, you rejoice and find consolation in your soul. Wherefore? Because the Holy Ghost is in you, "Who is everywhere present and filleth all things, the Treasury of blessings,"[2] Who comforts us. On the contrary, if you have done anything wrong, or even sometimes when you have not done anything wrong, you feel a deadly despondency in your soul. Wherefore? Because you have allowed the evil spirit of despondency to take possession of you. For instance, you begin to pray and you are overcome with despondency, whilst before you began to pray you did not feel it; or else you begin to read some book of a spiritual character—for

[1] S. John xiv. 26.

[2] Prayer to the Holy Ghost.

instance, the Holy Scripture—and you are also overpowered with despondency, slothfulness, doubt, incredulity, and unbelief. Wherefore? Because you are tempted by the evil spirits of despondency, doubt, and unbelief, who are using their craftiness against you. Or you are in church, attending Divine service; but you feel dull, heavy, and slothful—despondency has fallen upon you. Again wherefore? Because the evil spirits of slothfulness and despondency are using their craftiness against you. Or, again, you begin to write a religious work—a sermon, for instance—and you feel darkness and coldness in your heart, whilst your body is overcome with weakness. Wherefore? Because the invisible enemies are warring against you. Therefore the Holy Ghost is absolutely necessary to us all in all our good works. He is our power, strength, light, peace, and comfort.

All the blessings of the soul, that is, all that constitutes the true life, the peace and the joy of the soul, come from God! This I have proved by experience. My heart tells me so. Thou, O Holy Ghost, art a treasury of blessings!

For a long time I did not clearly understand how necessary it is that our soul should be strengthened by the Holy Ghost. But now the Most Gracious Lord has granted to me to know how indispensable this is. Yes, it is necessary every moment of our life, just as breathing is;

it is necessary during prayer and throughout the whole of our life. Unless He strengthens our soul, it is constantly inclined to every sin, and, therefore, to spiritual death; it becomes enfeebled, loses all power, through the evil that enters into the heart, and incapable of any good. Without the strengthening of the Holy Ghost, one feels how the heart is undermined by various evils, and is ready to sink every moment into their abyss. Then it is that our heart must stand firm as upon a rock. And this rock is—the Holy Ghost. He strengthens our powers; and when a man prays, He strengthens his heart by faith and by the hope of receiving that which he prays for. He inflames the soul with love to God; He fills the soul with bright, good thoughts, strengthening the mind and heart. If the man has any work to accomplish, He strengthens his heart by the conviction of the importance and the necessity of his labour, and by an invincible patience which overcomes all difficulties. He inspires in the man, in his intercourse with people of various positions and both sexes, a respect for the human person, who is made after God's image—whoever it may be—and is redeemed by the Blood of Christ the Lord; and makes him disregard the sometimes very unsightly outer appearance of another man's body and dress, as well as his roughness of speech and manners. It is the Holy Ghost Who unites us all through love, as the children of the same Heavenly Father, and in Jesus

Christ teaches us to pray: "Our Father which art in Heaven. . . ."

The Comforter, the Holy Ghost, Who fills the whole universe, passes through all believing, meek, humble, good, and simple human souls, dwelling in them, vivifying and strengthening them. He becomes one spirit with them and everything to them—light, strength, peace, joy, success in their undertakings, especially in a pious life, and everything good—"going through all understanding, pure and most subtil spirits."[1] "We have been all made to drink into one Spirit."[2] All pious people are filled with the Spirit of God similarly as a sponge is filled with water.

The Holy Ghost accomplishes all wonders and miracles. By the same Spirit power is given to one, and to another works of power. You have only to speak with faith, and need have no anxiety as to the fulfilment of the word; the Holy Ghost will care for this.

As, during a conversation between men, the air, which is everywhere and fills all things, serves as a medium between the word of one and the word of another, and the words of one reach the hearing of another through the air, and it would be impossible to speak and hear

[1] Wisdom of Solomon vii. 23.

[2] 1 Cor. xii. 13.

without air—so in spiritual respects the Holy Ghost, "Who is everywhere present and filleth all things,"[1] is a similar medium in our communion with the bodiless ones. We do not thoroughly understand how, by means of air, our words are heard by others, sometimes at a great distance, yet we know that they are heard; likewise, we do not understand how the holy angels and saints hear, in the Holy Ghost, the wail of our hearts; yet we know that it is heard. As in the first case we may be assured of our words having been heard by others from the answers, so in the latter we are similarly assured by the answers we receive. In the first case we see the person with whom we speak with our bodily eyes, and in the latter we see the person with whom we converse with our spiritual eyes. An image is presented to the bodily eye and to the spiritual eye—an invisible person or spirit. For corporal beings there is distance, whilst for the Holy Ghost it does not exist.

We are all able to think, because an unlimited Wisdom (Thought) exists, just as we are able to breathe because unlimited air-spaces exist. This is the reason why bright ideas upon any subject are called inspirations. Our thoughts are constantly flowing conditionally with the existence of the unlimited Spirit of Wisdom (Thought). This is why the Apostle says:

[1] Prayer to the Holy Ghost.

"Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God."[1] This is also why the Saviour Himself says: "Take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak."[2] Thus you see that the thought and even the word itself (the inspiration) come to us from without. This, of course, is in a state of grace and in cases of need. But even in our ordinary state all our bright thoughts come from our Guardian Angel and from God's Spirit; whilst, on the contrary, impure, dark thoughts proceed from our corrupt nature and from the Devil, ever lying in wait for us. How, then, should the Christian behave? "It is God which worketh in you."[3] In general, throughout the world we see the kingdom of thought in the structure of the whole visible world, as also in particular in the earth, in the rotation and the life of the terrestrial globe; in the distribution of the elements—light, air, water, earth, fire (concealed), whilst other elements are diffused in all animals—in birds, fishes, reptiles, beasts, and men—in their wise and ingenious construction, in their faculties, nature and habits; in plants, in their construction, nourishment, etc.; in a word, we see everywhere the kingdom of thought, even down to the lifeless stone and sand.

When you are reading a long form of prayer

[1] 2 Cor. iii. 5.
[2] S. Matt. x. 19.
[3] Phil. ii. 13.

aloud in the presence of a large concourse of people, then the enemy tries to disconcert your heart and to quench the words on your lips by the thought that the people do not understand many words, and that it is a useless waste of time to read such prayers. This is evidently foolishness. For what of the Holy Ghost, the Instructor in all truth? Does He remain inactive, does He not enlighten all human hearts? Have you not yourself experienced the enlightenment of your heart by the Holy Ghost? Formerly you did not understand some of the words and expressions, and then suddenly the Holy Ghost opened your mind so that you might understand these hitherto incomprehensible words and expressions—and such a light suddenly enlightens your heart; be assured that the same also happens with others. Read with a steadfast heart, without any hurtful suspiciousness. Sow the seed—God will give the growth.

How sharply are distinguished in us, on one side, the good spirit, the spirit of peace, of tranquillity, joy, light, the life-giving spirit; and, on the other side, the evil spirit, the spirit of straitness, weariness, despondency, darkness, the spirit that destroys our soul. The first is the Spirit of God, by which we live, spiritually breathe, move, and exist; the second is the evil spirit, Satan.

He who has built himself a house, he, by

every right, ought to live in it. We are the houses of our Creator; He has created us for Himself, for He "has done all things for His own sake;" and it is He Who should dwell in us, and not the Devil—this murderer, thief, ravisher, this deceiver. "Come and make Thine abode in us."[1] "We will come unto him, and make our abode with him."[2] "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"[3]

God is an incomplex, most perfect Being, that is, the purest holiness, the purest good and truth; and in order to be in union with God, in order to be one spirit with Him (for we are from Him), we must acquire, through His grace, the most perfect simplicity of goodness, holiness, and love. All the saints who are in heaven were cleansed by the blood of the Son of God, through the Holy Ghost, and have not a shadow of sin in them. It was for this that they struggled in this life, that they mortified their flesh in order to cleanse themselves "from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God,"[4] in order to become eternally united with that most glorious Being; it is for this reason also that the Holy Church with all her institutions now exists upon earth, the hierarchy, the Divine services, the sacraments, the rites; fasts were likewise appointed in order

[1] Prayer to the Holy Ghost.
[2] S. John xiv. 23.
[3] 1 Cor. iii. 16.
[4] 2 Cor. vii. 1.

to cleanse and sanctify the children of God, in order to unite them with that most blessed Being, glorified in the Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

"May the living water of the Holy Ghost fill my heart, and may rivers of living water flow from my heart to the glory of God, and for the salvation of God's people."

To the Glory of the Holy Trinity. Amen.

§ 4. The Spiritual Message of the Natural World.

The whole earth is full of His glory.—Isa. vi. 3.

For him who truly believes in God, all material earthly things and all visible worlds, as it were vanish; he cannot imagine a point of space without God; everywhere he contemplates the One Infinite Being—God. He represents to himself that with every breath of air he breathes God; for him the Lord is everywhere and in everything, and creatures are as though they did not exist, while he himself willingly vanishes mentally in order to give place also in himself to the one God, Who alone is, and Who works within him in everything.

Looking upon God's world, I see everywhere God's extraordinary bountifulness in the gifts

of nature: the surface of the earth is like the richest table, prepared with abundance and variety by the most loving and generous of hosts. The depths of the waters also serve to feed the man. What shall be said of the animals, quadrupeds, and birds? And what bountifulness is manifested in providing food and clothes for man! The Lord's mercies are innumerable. Look at all the earth supplies in summer and in autumn! Every Christian, especially the priest, ought to imitate God's bountifulness. Let your table be open to everybody, like the table of the Lord. The avaricious is God's enemy.

As the sun, though it is itself always in the heavens, but by its rays, as if by innumerable hands, reaches the earth and its entire surface, and communicates itself to all organic bodies, entering into them (the sun enters into bodies by its rays), warming them, giving them life and growth through its warmth, passing through transparent ones, or reflecting in them by its whole circle (there are as many images of the sun as there are transparent bodies), and warming the opaque, solid, and inorganic bodies —so the spiritual Sun, God, although Himself pre-eminently in the heavens, yet by His Life-giving Spirit, as though by His rays, communicates Himself to all reasonable creatures, angels and men, penetrating into their spiritual being, sanctifying them, giving them life, strength, and growth, in the same manner as the rays of the

sun penetrate into organic and vegetable bodies, giving them life and growth. As the sun, though it is itself in the heavens, lights the whole earth, communicating life to every creature and thing, however insignificant, so likewise the Lord, by the Light of the Trinity, enlightens all men, for He is the true Light, "which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."[1]

My thought, either bright or dark; my conscience, either accusing or excusing;[2] my heart, either tranquil and joyful, or sorrowful and oppressed; the organisation of my body, the organisation of the worlds and of the earth, which we inhabit, with all that is in it and around it, incessantly testify to the continual presence in me, with me, and everywhere, of mine and your Creator. May the dark and foolish thought that I am forsaken by my God, that He is not ever with me, ever flee far away from me!

When you walk in a forest, garden, or meadow, and see the young shoots of the plants, the fruits on the trees, and the variety of the flowers of the field, learn a lesson from God's plants—namely, the lesson that every tree each summer unfailingly puts forth at least one shoot of considerable size, and unfailingly grows in height and dimensions. It seems as though every tree endeavours each year to advance by the strength that God has given it; therefore, say to yourself,

[1] S. John. i. 9. [2] Rom. ii. 15.

"I, too, must each day, each year, absolutely grow higher and higher morally, better and better, more and more perfect; must advance on the road to the Kingdom of Heaven, or to the Father which is in Heaven, through the strength of our Lord Jesus Christ and His Spirit dwelling and working within me. As the field is adorned by a multitude of flowers, so should the field of my own soul be adorned by all the flowers of virtue; as the trees bring forth flowers and afterwards fruit, so must my soul bring forth the fruits of faith and good works."

We are accustomed to the works of God, and therefore value them but little; we do not, for instance, value even man as we ought to—that greatest work and miracle of God's omnipotence and grace. Look upon every man, whether he is one of your household, or a stranger to you, as upon something perpetually new in God's world, as upon the greatest miracle of God's omnipotence and grace, and do not let the fact of your being accustomed to him serve as a reason for you to neglect him. Esteem and love him, as your own self, constantly, and unchangeably.

Here before us is a living man. His eyes are fixed upon us, his ears are open to hear; his soul and body are before us, but we see the body and not the soul: we do not see his thoughts, his desires, his intentions, although

there is not an instant during which his soul does not think and live in a corresponding manner. So also before us, around us, and within us is visible nature, all God's beautiful world ; in it we see everywhere life, harmonious order, action, but we do not see the Author of life and order, we do not see the Great Architect Himself, although meanwhile He is present at every moment in every place, as the soul in the body, though He is not limited by it ; there is not a fraction of a moment during which He, as the All-perfect, Most Wise, All-merciful, Omniscient, Omnipresent, Almighty Spirit, does not think, does not shower benefits and wisdom upon His creatures. There is not a fraction of a moment during which He does not apply His wisdom and omnipotence, for God is a Self-acting Being, infinitely productive. Thus you look upon the world, but look upon it and observe everywhere in it its Author—God, everywhere present in it, filling everything, moving in everything, and ordering everything.

The Lord has full respect for nature, which He has created, and for her laws, as the production of His own infinite, most perfect wisdom ; this is why He usually accomplishes His will through the medium of nature and her laws ; for instance, when He punishes men or blesses them. Therefore, do not require miracles of Him without extreme necessity.

Sometimes in nature a warm, healthful wind

blows, pleasantly and lightly, permeating and coming into contact with the body, and the sky is serene; whilst at other times a cold wind blows, one feels, somehow, distressed and feverish, the wind pierces to the very bones and affects the body unpleasantly, the earth and sky are darkened; or else sometimes the state of the atmosphere is warm and warmth-giving, and at other times cold, benumbing. It is likewise in the spiritual life: sometimes our soul is surrounded and penetrated by a light, pleasant, warmth-giving, vivifying breath, we feel ourselves happy and tranquil; whilst at others our heart is touched by a heavy, deathly breath, accompanied by complete spiritual darkness. The first state proceeds from the Spirit of God, the second from the Devil. It is necessary to accustom ourselves to everything: as in the first case, not to grow self-conceited, so in the last, not to fall into despondency, into despair, but to fervently have recourse to God.

It is a remarkable phenomenon in nature that, if you put a plant into a large, wide pot or tub, it grows very much at the roots; they thicken, they give out many ramifications, but the tree itself does not grow much in height, and only yields few and small leaves and flowers. But if it is planted in a small pot, then the roots are small, but the plant itself grows rapidly in height and yields beautiful leaves and flowers (if it is the nature of the plant to produce flowers). Is it

not the same with man? When he lives in full liberty, in abundance and prosperity, then he grows in body and does not grow in spirit, does not bring forth fruits—good works; whilst when he lives in straitness, in poverty, sickness, misfortune, and afflictions, in a word, when his animal nature is crushed, then he grows spiritually, bears flowers of virtue, ripens and brings forth rich fruits. This is why the path of those who love God is a narrow one.

How artful and watchful a bird is! It does not let itself be caught in God's wide world, but when it sees anybody approaching and wishing to seize it, it immediately flies up from the earth and thus saves itself from the fowlers. So, also, the Christian must be wise and watchful in order that the incorporeal fowler may not catch his soul. Our soul is like a heavenly bird; the Devil, a wicked fowler, seeking to devour souls. As the bird, flying up to heaven, thus saves itself from the fowler, so likewise we, when we see the enemy—the Devil—striving to catch our soul by means of earthly things, must immediately forsake these things with all our heart, and must not for a moment attach ourselves to them, but must fly up in our thoughts to Jesus Christ, our Saviour, and thus we shall easily be delivered "from the snare of the fowler."[1]

Whose are the leaves of the tree? They are

[1] Psalm xci. 3.

God's. Whose are the good thoughts in you? They are God's. Whose is the capacity in the trees to grow and form their tissues, and to produce and develop leaves and fruit? It is God's —that is, given by God. Whose is your capacity of thought and word? It is God's. Do the trees wrongfully use the powers given to them by God? No. Do men wrongfully use the capacities and powers bestowed upon them by God? They do. They misuse them through their intellect, received from God for the purpose of knowing God and His truths; they misuse them through their heart, created for the purpose of loving God and their neighbours, of experiencing the blessedness of communion with God; and they misuse them through free will, given to them for the purpose of endless improvement in virtue.

When God looks mercifully upon earth-born creatures through the eyes of nature, through the eyes of bright, healthful weather, every one feels bright and joyful. When there is a healthful breeze, there is wholesome air in all bodies and souls; but when a cold, damp, strong wind blows, then every one feels oppressed in soul and body. Many earth-born creatures groan from maladies; many give themselves up to despondency and melancholy. So powerful and irresistible is the influence of nature upon mankind. And it is remarkable that those who are less bound by carnal desires

and sweetnesses, who are less given up to gluttony, who are more moderate in eating and drinking, to them nature is more kindly disposed, and does not oppress them—at least, not nearly so much as those who are the slaves of their nature and their flesh. Oh! how clear it is that our life is in the Lord, and not in sensual things; how clear it is that the Lord is in everything—"it is He which worketh all in all."[1] In the air He is our breath; in food the satisfying of our hunger; in drink the quenching of our thirst; in clothing our raiment; in the dwelling our protection, warmth, and tranquillity; in sleep our rest; in pure, instructive, chaste, and edifying conversation our speech; in mutual love, our love. Lord, Master, our Creator and Benefactor, grant that we may always remember Thee at every moment of our life; that by Thee "we live and move and have our being;"[2] that we have life, breath, and everything from Thee. But let us also remember that if in all that has been enumerated we pervert God's laws, He becomes our grievous punishment. He will become our punishment even in the air, in food and drink; He will no longer be the satisfying of our hunger and the quenching of our thirst, but either our aversion from them or a sickness, as happens when, it is said, that food does no good to some person; in clothing or in the dwelling, our weakness and distress of mind; in sleep not rest, but uneasiness and fear; in speech, constraint; in wrongful

[1] 1 Cor. xii. 6. [2] Acts xvii. 28.

love, the fiery torments. The sources of punishment usually appear in our sinful inclinations themselves. "Wherewithal a man sinneth, by the same also shall he be punished."[1]

Could the leaves exist without the tree, and could the tree itself exist without earth, air, water, and warmth? Likewise no soul can exist without God, without His Son, without His Spirit. God is my being, my breath, my light, my strength, my drink, my food. He carries me as a mother carries her infant in her arms. More than this. Carrying me, my soul and body, He dwells in me, and is united to me.

Faith in God's existence is closely connected with faith in the existence of our own souls, as a part of the spiritual world. God's existence is as evident to the pious mind as its own being, because every thought, good or bad, every desire, every intention, word or act of such a mind is followed by a corresponding change in the state of the heart, peace or trouble, joy or grief, and this is the result of the action upon it of the God of spirits and bodies, Who is reflected in the pious mind as the sun is reflected in a drop of water; the purer the drop is, the better, the clearer will be the reflection; the more turbid the drop, the dimmer will be the reflection; so that in the soul's state of extreme

[1] Wisdom xi. 16.

impurity or darkness, the reflection entirely ceases and the soul is left in a state of spiritual darkness, in a state of insensibility. In this state the man having eyes, sees not, and having ears, hears not. Again, in relation to our souls, God may be likened to the outer air in relation to the mercury of the thermometer—with this difference, that the expansion and rest, rise and fall of the mercury proceed from the change in the state of the atmosphere; whilst, in the first case, God remains unchangeable, everlasting and eternally good and just. Whilst the soul, changeable in its relation to God, suffers changes in itself, thus it unavoidably expands and obtains peace of heart when it draws nearer to God by faith and good works, and unavoidably contracts, becomes restless and wearied, when it withdraws itself from God by unlawful acts, want of faith, and unbelief in God's Truth.

We are generally delighted at fine, bright, warm weather, and like to talk about it; but in the heavenly abodes of the angels and saints the brightness, healthfulness, and freshness are incomparably greater. Why, then, do we not care to speak of the inmates of those dwellings, of that life, of that brightness, of that blessedness? Joyful, life-giving, and bright is the sun, but the light of God's countenance, which the angels and the souls of the righteous rejoice in, is still more joyful, life-giving, and bright. "Make us to be numbered with Thy saints in glory ever-

lasting. O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine heritage: govern them, and lift them up for ever."[1]

Do not be despondent when the clouds of hell, one darker than the other, descend upon your soul; when infernal malice, envy, doubt, obstinacy, and other passions, rise up in your soul; know surely that the gathering of these dark clouds upon your mental horizon is inevitable; but they are not always there and will not remain long; they are like the appearance of dark clouds on the sky in nature—they pass over and disappear, after which the mental atmosphere of the soul is cleared up again. In nature there must be clouds on the sky, and the darkening of the light of day; but these clouds are not constant, they soon pass away, and then the light of the sun shines again with renewed power.

God is nearer to us than any man at every time. He is nearer to me than my raiment, nearer than the air or light, nearer than my wife, father, mother, daughter, son, or friend. I live in Him, soul and body. I breathe in Him, think in Him, feel, consider, intend, speak, undertake, work in Him. "For in Him we live, and move, and have our being."[2] "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His

[1] From the Te Deum Laudamus.

[2] Acts xvii. 28.

good pleasure."[1] Therefore we must always see God before us at our right hand, we must be strong, and in order not to sin we must so place ourselves that nothing could thrust God from our thoughts and hearts, that nothing could hide Him from us—no undue partiality for food, drink, money, dress, house and its furniture, nor for any person—that no worldly distractions and pastimes could deprive us of our most sweet, most beloved Lord, but that we may every hour and every minute belong to Him, and perpetually be with Him, as He Himself is perpetually with us, as He constantly cares for us and guards us. But when I sin, or when I have any undue partiality for anything, then He is far from me, not in respect to space, for He at all times fills everything, but in respect to my own spiritual withdrawal from Him, to my own indifference towards Him, in respect to His actually depriving me of His grace and His presence in my heart, for then His enemy, the Devil, dwells in me.

The tree firmly fixed in the earth by its roots grows and brings forth fruit. The soul of a man firmly fixed in God by faith and love, as by spiritual roots, also lives, grows spiritually, and brings forth the fruits of virtue pleasing to God, through which the soul lives now and shall live in the future world. The tree, when uprooted from the ground, ceases to live by the life which it received from the heart through the roots.

[1] Phil. ii. 13.

Similarly, the soul of the man which has lost faith and love to God and does not dwell in God, in Whom alone it can live, spiritually dies. What the earth is to the plants God is to the soul.

It is the same to the Lord to give flesh to any creature He likes, either to an animal or a plant, as it would be to me to make a garment or clothing and put it on myself: "Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews."[1] And what an infinite multitude and variety of material the Lord has, out of which He, the Creator, creates various clothing, of various shapes for His creatures (animals, birds, fishes, reptiles, insects)! And us He will eventually clothe with light, like unto the light of the sun in His kingdom! "Upon Thy right hand did stand the queen in a vesture of gold."[2] "Then shall the righteous shine forth, as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."[3] And now we are clothed with the earth, water, air, warmth—such is our present clothing. And how wisely and conveniently all these elements are made and brought into union in our being! It is not heavy, and it is comely. O most wise and almighty Artist! Life-giving Artist! How beautiful, suitable, and animate is everything that Thou hast created! At Thy Will even the dust is animate, the dust moves!

[1] Job x. 11. [2] Psalm xlv. 9.
[3] S. Matt. xiii. 43.

Our heart is like the darkened earth; the Gospel is like the sun, enlightening and giving life to our hearts. May the true sun of Thy righteousness shine in our hearts, O Lord!

All men are the breath and the creation of the One God—from God they have come forth, and to God, as to their origin, they will return: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God Who gave it."[1] "That by these ye might be partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."[2] As the breath of the One God, and as having proceeded from one man, men ought, naturally, to live in mutual love, mutually caring for one another, and ought not to be divided from each other by selfishness, pride, malice, envy, avarice, or unsociability of character, "that they may be one."[3] Look at the ants, how friendly they are; look at the bees, how friendly they are; look at the flights of pigeons, daws, rooks, crows, geese, ducks, swans, sparrows, how friendly they all are; look at a flock of sheep, and in general at any horned cattle, how friendly they all are. Think of the innumerable shoals of some sorts of fishes in the seas and rivers, which always like to move in shoals, how friendly they are. Think also how zealously they all take care of each other, help each other, love each other—

[1] Eccles. xii. 7. [2] 2 S. Peter i. 4.
[3] S. John xvii. 22.

and be shamed by the dumb creatures, you who do not live in love with others and flee from the obligation of bearing one another's burdens.[1]

Why did not the Almighty create the world at once, but in six days? In order to teach man, by deeds, to perform his work gradually, not hurriedly, but with consideration. If you pray, pray without hurrying; if you read the Gospel or, in general, any religious or worldly books, do not read them hurriedly, but read with consideration and with a true view of the matter. If you are learning a lesson, do not hurry to finish it quickly, but penetrate into the subject deeply and consider it well. If you are doing any other work, do it without hurrying, with consideration, quietly. Even the world was not created instantaneously, but in six days. The Lord shows us an example in everything; let us follow in His steps.

It is not the sun that shines, it is the Lord Who shines, by His incomparable goodness, His unspeakable light. If He has given so much light to the sun, then certainly He Himself has infinitely more; if He has given so much light to the sun, then in the life to come He will certainly give incomparably more light to the righteous, and this sun is nothing in comparison to the reasonable human soul. Thus, if the material, created light shines so dazzlingly,

[1] Gal. vi. 2.

then how will the primary, true, uncreated Light—God Himself—shine? There is an analogy between the material world (beginning with the sun, down to the smallest blade of grass) and the spiritual world.

O wonderful proof of the omnipresence of God! For instance, your heart is wounded by an attachment, even a momentary one, to silver, let us suppose, and it begins to ache; but as soon as you say to God from your whole heart, "Thou art my only treasure, Thou art my silver and gold, and food and raiment," you will immediately feel relieved.

In the same manner as objects situated at a great distance off on the earth, though they may be large, are quite invisible from afar if the sun is not reflected in them, whilst even small ones are visible a long way off if the sun is reflected in them, so it is also amongst men: those in whom the Eternal Sun of Righteousness, God, is not reflected in His perfections, are only noticeable when quite near by a very few; but if the Sun of Righteousness is reflected in them, then they are seen by all from a very great distance, they are glorified by all; they are people of all places and of all times (the saints); some of them shine like the sun, others like the moon, and others like the stars.

My soul is in God, as a fish in water or a bird in the air, surrounded by Him upon all

sides, at every time; it lives in Him, it moves in Him, it rests in Him, and finds freedom in Him.

Observe how the Lord is always with you in every place, in His image and likeness, which are in yourself. You think by the Father, you speak by the Word, and you act in the Holy Ghost. What air and light are to the body, the same is the thought, or God the Father, to the soul; what food is to the body, the same is the Word to the soul; what breath and warmth are to the body, the same is the Holy Ghost to the soul.

A morning prayer. O God! Creator and Master of the World! Mercifully protect Thy creature, adorned with Thy Godly image, in these morning hours. Let Thine eyes, millions and millions of times brighter than the rays of the sun, vivify and enlighten my soul, darkened and slain by sin. Deliver me from despondency and slothfulness, grant me joy and vigour of soul, so that with a glad heart I may praise Thy mercy, Thy holiness, Thy boundless greatness, and Thy infinite perfections, at every hour and in every place. For Thou, Lord, art my Creator and the Master of my life, and to Thee Thy reasonable creatures every hour ascribe glory and praise, both now and for ever and to ages of ages. Amen.

§ 5. Man and his Maker.

What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the Son of man, that Thou visitest him? —Psalm viii. 4.

Do not confound man—that image of God—with the wickedness that is in him, because the wickedness is only accidental, his misfortune, sickness, an illusion of the Devil; but his being —the image of God—still remains in him.

Man is a small world. As the soul is in the body, so God is in the world. When the soul leaves the body it immediately crumbles to pieces. Likewise, when the Spirit of God leaves the world it will immediately crumble to pieces. The soul is throughout the body, bu. especially in the heart, and God is throughout the world, but especially in heaven and in temples. And therefore recognise at every step the presence of God.

God's wisdom, mercy, and omnipotence may be observed above all in the fact that the Lord places each one of us in such a position, that if we wish we can bring to God the fruits of good works, and save ourselves and others, and that out of the greatest sinners He makes righteous men, obeying His grace, which leads to salvation, and wonderfully saves us from all misfortunes, rescuing us even from destruction itself.

One definite commandment was given to Adam and Eve, in order that by fulfilling this one commandment—which was, moreover, a very easy one—men might acquire the habit of fulfilling the will of God, the fulfilment of which constitutes the whole well-being of creatures, and might be strengthened in the love of God. If we turn our attention to the contrary—to the non-fulfilment of the will of the Creator and the fulfilment of our own will, in opposition to the Creator's—we observe that little by little a man changes for the worse and perverts his own high nature, created after the image and likeness of God, and becomes God's enemy. So important is the fulfilment of God's commandments, and so destructive is their non-fulfilment! By giving to the first men His definite commandment not to eat the fruits of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, the Lord God revealed Himself as the guide of the newly-created reasonable creatures, of His children by adoption. Whose fault was it that this guidance was rejected, and that man preferred to be governed by his own will? Even, until now, notwithstanding all the progress in sciences and arts, notwithstanding all the treasures of human wisdom, neither the man of ancient nor of modern times can educate himself, because he rejected even from the beginning the guidance of God; for, say, who but God should be our guide? And both at present and in the past only those men successfully completed their mental and moral education

who trusted in God and lived in accordance with the Gospel and the teaching of the Church, submitting themselves to her guidance. This is useful for all modern teachers to remember. We have many sciences, but the result obtained is small; our youths have much in their heads, whilst in their hearts they have but little—very little, and often, alas! even nothing. Life, then, does not correspond with education and science. But "though I understand all mysteries and all knowledge, . . . and have not charity, I am nothing."[1]

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock."[2] This means that the Lord continually stands at the doors of our heart, closed or being closed to Him by sins or various passions. "Behold, I stand." You pray, and He stands at your very heart, and is attentive to every movement and feeling of your heart.

Man! when I look upon you—upon your earthly feelings, upon your flesh—when I remember the day of your birth, and the days that followed of your childhood and growth, up till now, and when I afterwards transport my thoughts to the day of your death, and after that to the eternity, which is destined to you from the foundation of the world, then I do not know at what most to marvel—at your nothingness, or at the omnipotence and goodness of the

[1] 1 Cor. xiii. 2, 3. [2] Rev. iii. 20.

Creator Who has mercifully given you life, and will eventually clothe your corruptible and mortal body with immortality. My wonderment increases when I see that the Lord God, the Eternal King, gives you His Own Flesh and Blood, to partake of in the same manner as, in the days of His Flesh, He also Himself likewise took part of our flesh and blood,[1] in order to give you eternal life.

As the rivers flow into the sea, so the souls of men should flow towards God.

What an immeasurably great honour it is to mankind that they can open their lips before God; that they can converse with Him, and are able to make request to Him of their needs; to thank Him for His benefits, to praise His unspeakable magnificence, and to be assured that this sacrifice of thanksgiving and praise is agreeable to God; that our highest spiritual requests to Him relating to the salvation of our souls are always fulfilled! How immeasurably high is man exalted in this respect above all other sentient and animate creatures! No other creature has received such honour from God, though they, too, have tongues, expressing the needs of their nature; for it is said that young ravens call upon Him.[2] Let us, therefore, make use of this great honour, in order to be worthy of a still higher honour from the Lord—of the

[1] Heb. v. 7.; ii. 14. [2] Psalm cxlvii. 9.

heavenly calling. There, in heaven, shall be our full glory; whilst here its beginning only is revealed to true Christians.

Wherever I look with my spiritual vision, whether within me or upon me, or outside of me—everywhere, I see powerful reasons for thanking and praising the Lord. Especially when I look only within myself: then I see the strongest reason for doing so. The whole strength of my heart, all my spiritual light, comes from God; all my bodily strength, everything that serves to maintain my bodily life, comes from God. Everywhere I see the glory the sole glory, of my God, and see nothing in myself of which I could boast as of my own. Glory to Him Who gives me strength! Glory to Him Who works through me, and within me. As I have nothing of my own, and have everything from God, down to the smallest good inclination of my heart, down to every holy and bright thought, whilst without God I am nothing—worse than this, I am all evil; therefore I have the strongest reasons to have recourse to God in prayer for everything. I have especially powerful reasons to thank God for His most pure and life-giving Sacrament—His Body and Blood; it is everything to me. I fervently praise the Lord Jesus Christ, our God, for His unspeakable love to us mortals, revealed in the Holy Sacrament.

God is Truth, and my prayer should be truth

as well as life; God is Light, and my prayer should be offered in the light of the mind and the heart; God is Fire, and my prayer as well as life should be ardent; God is perfectly free, and my prayer should be the free outpouring of the heart. What riches there are in the human spirit! I have only to think of God, only to desire a hearty union with God, and He is immediately with me; neither the walls of a house, nor the bars of a prison, nor mountains, nor gulfs shall hinder this union. God is immediately with me, likewise the angels and saints; with God they are all before my eyes, close to my heart, as the nearest of friends, as those who are akin to me. O the riches of the human spirit!

The Lord is everything to me; He is the strength of my heart and the light of my intellect. He inclines my heart to everything good; He strengthens it; He also gives me good thoughts; He is my rest and my joy; He is my faith, hope, and love; He is my food and drink, my raiment, my dwelling-place. As a mother is everything to her infant—its mind, will, sight, hearing, taste, smell and feeling, as well as its food and drink, its clothing, hands and feet—so, likewise, the Lord is everything to me, when I yield myself wholly unto Him. But, alas! when I fall away from the Lord, then the Devil enters into me, and if I did not turn my heart's gaze towards the Lord, did I not, amidst the enemy's

oppression, call upon the Lord for help, then the Devil would have been, as he sometimes is, very evil to me: malice, despondency, perfect feebleness towards everything good, despair, hatred, envy, avarice, blasphemous, wicked, and impure thoughts, contempt for everything—in short, he would have been, and sometimes is, my intellect, my will, sight, hearing, taste, smell, feeling, my hands and feet. Therefore, put your trust in the Lord. He is that which is, infinite in holiness, omnipotence, grace, mercy, bountifulness, and wisdom.

There is no happiness for me on earth save the Lord Jesus Christ, with His Father and the Holy Ghost. He is my sole blessedness upon earth. After God, there is nothing on earth dearer to me (as it should be), than the human soul—it is dearer than anything else. Man is a precious being. God Himself came down from heaven upon earth for his salvation. To man He gives for food and drink His most pure Body and Blood (all Himself), only that he may become blessed, that he may not be lost. All the fruits of the earth, the treasures of all the three kingdoms of the earth, He has given into the dominion for the use and pleasure of man. By all these immeasurable bounties the Lord has shown,and still shows, that He infinitely loves mankind, and every man separately. Let us, too, imitate God's love and bountifulness;

let us be, as far as possible, merciful and bountiful, as our Heavenly Father is merciful.[1]

Man is a wonderful, grand creation of God, especially a holy man; he is a star of God; he is a splendid flower, wholly beautiful and pure, a sweet-smelling cedar-tree, a priceless pearl, a precious stone, a beautiful, fruitful tree of God's paradise. Man is truly a wonderful creature of God! Glory be to his Creator and Providence! Glory be to the Saviour of mankind, Who draws us out of the mire of the passions, from corruption and death, and leads us into the life eternal!

[1] S. Luke vi. 36.

CHAPTER II.

PRAYER.

§ 1. The Spirit of Prayer.

Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.—Gal. iv. 6.

The foundation of prayer is the yearning of the image towards its prototype, as of like to like.

"Prayer is the lifting up of the mind and heart to God,"[1] the contemplation of God, the daring converse of the creature with the Creator, the soul reverently standing before Him, as before the King and the Life Itself, giving life to all; the oblivion of everything that surrounds us, the food of the soul; its air and light, its life-giving warmth, its cleansing from sin; the easy yoke of Christ, His light burden. Prayer is the constant feeling (the recognition) of our infirmity or spiritual poverty, the sanctification of the soul, the foretaste of future blessedness, angelic bliss, the heavenly rain, refreshing, watering, and

[1] From Philaret's Catechism.

fertilising the ground of the soul, the power and strength of the soul and body, the purifying and freshening of the mental air, the enlightenment of the countenance, the joy of the spirit, the golden link, uniting the creature to the Creator, courage and valour in all the afflictions and temptations of life, the lamp of life, success in all undertakings, dignity equal with the angels, the strengthening of faith, hope and love. Prayer is intercourse with the holy angels and saints, who pleased God since the beginning of the world. Prayer is the amendment of life, the mother of heartfelt contrition and tears; a powerful motive for works of mercy; security of life; the destruction of the fear of death; the disdain of earthly treasures; the desire for heavenly blessings; the expectation of the universal Judge, of the common resurrection and of the life of the world to come; a strenuous effort to save ourselves from eternal torments; unceasing seeking for mercy (forgiveness) of the Sovereign; walking before God; the blissful vanishing of self before the all-creating and all-filling Creator; the living water of the soul. Prayer is holding all men in our hearts through love; the descent of heaven into the soul; the abiding of the most Holy Trinity in the soul, in accordance with that which has been said: "We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him."[1]

If you wish to pray with a life-giving prayer,

[1] S. John xiv. 23.

first of all strengthen your heart in the Lord. "My heart is strengthened (rejoiceth) in the Lord, mine horn is exalted in the Lord."[1]

The Lord is so near to each one, especially to the Christian who leads a holy life, that his heart and body are the temple of the Holy Ghost. "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?"[2] Therefore, how easy it is to pray in every place! The word of the prayer, or God, to Whom you pray, "is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart."[3]

"It is good for me to draw near to God,"[4] said David, who had tasted the sweetness of prayer and praising God. Other men confirm this, and I a sinner also. Observe, even here on earth, to draw near to God is a good and blessed thing (while we are yet in the sinful flesh, which has much that is agreeable and disagreeable in itself). Therefore, what blessedness it will be to be united to God there, in heaven! And the blessedness of union with God here on earth is a specimen and pledge of the blessedness of union with God after death, in eternity. You see, then, how good, merciful, and true the Creator is! In order to assure you of the future blessedness proceeding from union with Him, He allows you to experience the

[1] 1 Sam. ii. 1.
[2] 1 Cor. vi. 19.
[3] Rom. x. 8.
[4] Psalm lxxiii. 28.

beginning of this blessedness here on earth when you approach Him sincerely. Yes, even here my invisible soul rests in the invisible God; therefore it will still more perfectly rest in Him when it is separated from the body.

As an ill-natured man, coming with a request to one who is kind, gentle and meek, for the greater success of his request tries to resemble him, so the Christian, approaching God with a prayer to Him, or to His most pure Mother, or to the angels and saints, in order to insure the success of his prayer, ought to try to resemble as far as possible the Lord Himself, or His most pure Mother, or the angels and saints. In this lies the secret of drawing near to God, and of His speedily hearing our prayers.

The invisible God acts upon my soul as if He were visible, as if He were present here before me, knowing all my thoughts and feelings; every inward slothfulness, stubbornness, or other passion is always accompanied by a corresponding punishment. In general, if my inward disposition is unworthy of God, of His holiness, then I suffer punishment for it in my heart, a devouring fire; and if it is a worthy one, then I am joyful and at peace.

My heart finds its peace in the highest, in spiritual things and not in earthly and material ones. Grant, Lord, that I may ever meditate on the highest, and entirely renounce earthly

wisdom. My trust is in Thy goodness! "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help."[1]

Prayer is the living water, by means of which the soul quenches its thirst. When you pray, represent to yourself as though God alone were before you, God in Three Persons, and besides Him no one else. Represent to yourself that God is in the world as the soul is in the body, though He is infinitely higher than the world, and is not limited by it. Your body is small, and it is wholly penetrated by your small soul; the world is large, but God is infinitely great, and fills everything throughout the whole of creation—"Who is everywhere present, and filleth all things."[2]

For the soul of the pious, God-fearing man there is an invisible spiritual intercourse with God. Like a father or a stern teacher, the Lord at one time approves, at another condemns our thoughts, desires and intentions; at one time He says that this is good, and that bad. He rewards us for the good and punishes us for the evil; and all this is at once evident to the soul.

Though God knows all our needs, prayer is necessary for the cleansing and enlightenment of our soul. It is well to stand in the sunshine:

[1] Psalm cxxi. 1.

[2] Prayer to the Holy Ghost.

it is warm and light; likewise, when standing in prayer before God, our spiritual Sun, we are warmed and enlightened.

The best moments on earth are those during which we meditate upon heavenly things in general, when we recognise or defend the truth, that heavenly dweller and denizen. Only then do we truly live. Therefore, the essential interests of the soul require that we should oftener rise above the earth, upwards to heaven, where is our true life, our true country, which shall have no end.

With sincere Christians prayer is continual, because we continually sin; gratitude is perpetual, because every day, every moment we receive fresh mercies from God, besides the old mercies which are numberless. Praise is also perpetual, because we perpetually see the glory of our God's works in ourselves and in the world, especially the glory of His infinite love to us.

Why is long-continued prayer necessary? In order that by prolonged, fervent prayer we may warm our cold hearts, hardened in prolonged vanity. For it is strange to think, and still more so to require, that the heart, hardened in worldly vanity, could be speedily penetrated during prayer by the warmth of faith and the love of God. No; labour and labour, time and time

are needed to attain this. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force."[1] The Kingdom of Heaven does not soon come into the heart when men themselves so assiduously flee from it. The Lord Himself expresses His will that our prayers should not be short, by giving us for an example the importunate widow who often came to the judge and troubled him with her requests.[2] Our Lord, our Heavenly Father knows, even before we ask Him, what things we have need of,[3] what we want; but we do not know Him as we ought, for we give ourselves up to worldly vanity, instead of committing ourselves into the hands of our Heavenly Father. Therefore in His wisdom and mercy He turns our needs into a pretext for our turning to Him. "Turn ye, My wandering children, even now unto Me, to your Father, with your whole hearts. If before you were far from Me, even now, at least, warm by faith and love to Me your hearts which were formerly cold."

Lord! grant me a simple, kind, open, believing, loving, and generous heart, worthy of being Thy dwelling-place, O most gracious One!

[1] S. Matt. xi. 12. [2] S. Luke xviii. 2-6.
[3] S. Matt. vi. 8.

§ 2. Faith in Prayer.

He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that is He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.—Heb. xi. 6.

The chief thing in prayer for which we must care above all is—lively, clear-sighted faith in the Lord: represent Him vividly before yourself and within you—then ask of Jesus Christ in the Holy Ghost whatever you desire and you will obtain it. Ask simply, without the slightest doubt—then your God will be everything to you, accomplishing in an instant great and wonderful acts, as the sign of the cross accomplishes great wonders. Ask for both spiritual and material blessings not only for yourself, but for all believers, for the whole body of the Church, not separating yourself from other believers, but in spiritual union with them, as a member of the one great body of the Church of Christ, and loving all, as your brethren or children in Christ, as the case may be. The Heavenly Father will fill you with great peace and boldness.

If you wish to ask of God in prayer any blessing for yourself, then before praying prepare yourself by undoubting and firm faith, and take in good time means against doubt and unbelief. For it will go ill with you if during the prayer itself your heart wavers in its faith and does not stand firm in it; then do not even expect to

obtain of the Lord what you have prayed for doubtingly, for in so doing you have offended the Lord, and God does not bestow His gifts upon a reviler. "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive,"[1] said the Lord. This means, that if you doubt and do not believe, you shall not receive. "If ye have faith, and doubt not," said He also, ye shall have power to move mountains.[2] Therefore, if you doubt and do not believe, you shall not have power to do so. "Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed," says the Apostle James. "For let not that man think he shall receive anything of the Lord. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways."[3] The heart that doubts that God can grant what it asks for is punished for this doubt: it is painfully oppressed and contracted by doubt. Do not anger Almighty God even by a shade of doubt—especially you, who have already experienced many and many times the omnipotence of God. Doubt is a blasphemy against God, an insolent lie of the heart or of the lying spirit that nestles in the heart, against the spirit of truth. Fear it as you would fear a venomous serpent, or no—what I would rather say, is,—despise it, do not take the slightest heed of it. Remember that God, during your prayer, is waiting for your affirmative answer to the

[1] S. Matt. xxi. 22. [2] S. Matt. xxi. 21.
[3] S. James i. 6-8.

question which He is inwardly asking you: "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" To which question you must from the depth of your heart reply, "Yea, Lord."[1] Let the following considerations also help you in your doubt or unbelief: I ask of God, firstly, that which already exists, and nothing merely imaginary, not a fanciful good, and everything that exists receives its being from God: because "without Him was not anything made that was made,"[2] and therefore, nothing that happens can happen without Him, and everything has either received its being from Him, or happens by His will or His permission, by means of powers and faculties given by Him to His creatures—and in everything that exists or is still happening, God is an all-powerful Master. Besides this, He calleth those things which be not as though they were.[3] Therefore, had I even asked for that which does not exist, He could give it to me by creating it. Secondly, I ask of God what is possible, because what is impossible for us is possible for God; and there cannot be any difficulty even in this respect, because God can do for me even that which is impossible in my own opinion. It is our misfortune that our faith is hindered by the short-sightedness of our reason—that spider that catches the truth in the web of its judgments, its arguments and analogies. Faith embraces and sees suddenly, whilst reason

[1] S. Matt. ix. 28. [2] S. John i. 3.
[3] Rom. iv. 17.

arrives at the truth by circuitous ways; faith is the means of communication between one spirit and another, whilst reason is the means of communication between the spiritually sensual and simply material: the first is the spirit and the latter the flesh.

Prayer breathes hope, and a prayer without hope is a sinful prayer.

You who pray! "Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also?"[1] Is it not enough for you to see weakness in men? Do you wish to see weakness in God Himself, and secretly think that God cannot fulfil your petition? Many things are difficult and many quite impossible to men; but how can you consider anything difficult for God? Indeed, can anything be difficult or impossible to Him? All things are possible and easy to Him. For "with God all things are possible."[2] Thus, when you pray, be firmly convinced that for the Lord everything is easy, that He can do everything in a moment. Do not ascribe to God your own impotency to do anything, or to help yourself or your neighbour in any way. For you as a weak, insignificant creature nearly everything is difficult; you have experienced this a thousand times upon yourself and others; but "is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also?"—that is, is

[1] Isa. vii. 13. [2] S. Matt. xix. 26.

it not enough for you to ascribe difficulty and weakness to men, but must you ascribe similar difficulties to the Lord also—the Lord Himself, Who has created everything by His thought and word? Remember that for Him nothing is difficult. Ask Him boldly for everything; hope to receive everything from Him. "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."[1]

When praying, we must believe in the power of the words of the prayer, in such a manner as not to separate the words from the deeds they express; we must believe that the deeds follow the words, as the shadow follows the body, for the word and the deed of the Lord are indivisible, "for He commanded, and they were created."[2] And you must likewise believe that that which you say in the prayer, for which you have asked, will be done. You have praised God, and God has received your praise. You have thanked God, and God has received your thanks as a spiritual fragrance. It is our misfortune that we have little faith, and separate the word from the deed, as the body from the soul, as the form from the contents, as the shadow from the body—that during prayer, as in life, we are "sensual, having not the Spirit," and therefore our prayers are fruitless.

When praying, I firmly believe (1) that God

[1] S. Matt. xxi. 22. [2] Psalm cxlviii. 5.

alone is and fills everything, and that He is therefore at my right hand; (2) that I am His image; (3) that He is an abyss of mercy, the source of every mercy, and that He Himself has authorised me to pray to Him.

When you are praying, either inwardly only, or both inwardly and outwardly, be firmly convinced that the Lord is there, by you and within you, and hears every word, even if only said to youself, even when you only pray mentally; speak from your whole heart, sincerely, judge yourself likewise sincerely, without in the least justifying yourself; have faith that the Lord will have mercy upon you—and you will not remain unforgiven. This is true. It is taken from experience.

Believe and trust that as it is easy for you to breathe the air and live by it, or to eat and drink, so it is easy and even still easier for your faith to receive all spiritual gifts from the Lord. Prayer is the breathing of the soul; prayer is our spiritual food and drink.

Prayer is founded upon faith. I believe that there is a God, before whom I lay my prayer, that there is an Almighty, holding all creatures in the palm of His hand, and giving various kinds of voices to His creatures, for inward intercourse amongst themselves, but not needing any voice Himself. I trust that my prayer will reach Him, or, to speak more exactly, will go

direct from my heart to His ears. Similarly, the correspondence of a son with his father or mother, or between brothers and sisters, or that of a father with his children, or between friends at a distance from each other, is also founded on faith. They are sure when writing letters that the persons to whom they write are alive; they trust that their written conversation will reach them, will produce certain impressions, ideas, and feelings, corresponding to those expressed in the letter, and that they will answer the letter in accordance with its contents. As in life we are guided in many things by faith and hope, so much more in relation to the spiritual world should we "walk by faith, not by sight."[1]

Prayer hopes to receive all things. Thrice-radiant Love, have mercy upon me!

All you who draw near to serve God in prayer learn to be like Him, meek, humble, and true of heart; do not let there be any deceitfulness or duplicity or coldness in your soul. Strive to have His Spirit, for "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His."[2] The Lord seeks in us that which is like and akin to Himself, on to which His grace may be grafted. Remember that not a single word is lost during prayer, if you say it from your heart; God hears each word, and weighs it in a balance. Sometimes it seems to us that our words only strike

[1] 2. Cor. v. 7. [2] Rom. viii. 9.

the air in vain, and sound as the voice of one crying in the wilderness. No, no; it is not so! We must remember that God understands us when we pray, that is, our words, just as those who pray perfectly understand the words themselves, for man is God's image. The Lord responds to every desire of the heart, expressed in words or unexpressed.

Glory to the never failing power of Thy cross, O Lord! When the enemy oppresses me by sinful thoughts and feelings, and I, having no freedom in my heart, make the sign of the cross several times with faith, then my sin suddenly passes away from me, the straitness vanishes, and I obtain freedom. Glory to Thee, Lord! Lord, let nothing, nothing carnal, material, turn me away from Thee! Let me always be with Thee! How good it is to be with Thee!

§ 3. Humility in Prayer.

Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, Whose Name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.—Isa. lvii. 15.

During prayer, intentional, deliberate, extreme humility is indispensable. We must remember Who speaks and What He says, this is especially necessary during the Lord's Prayer: "Our Father . . . ." Humility destroys all the snares

of the enemy. Ah! how much secret pride there is in us. This, we say, I know; this I do not need; this is not for me; this is superfluous; in that I am not a sinner. How much sophistry of our own!

Prayer is the proof of my reasonable personality, of my likeness to God, the pledge of my future godliness and blessedness. I was created from nothing, I am nothing before God, as having nothing of my own; but, by the mercy of God, I am a being endued with reason, with a heart, with free will, and by my reason and freedom I can, by turning with my heart to Him, continually increase in myself His infinite kingdom, increase more and more His gifts in me, draw from Him, as from an ever-flowing, inexhaustible source, every blessing, both spiritual and material, especially spiritual ones. Prayer instils in me that I am the image of God, that by the humble and thankful disposition of my soul before God, and by my free will, I infinitely increase in myself the spiritual gifts of God, that I can thus infinitely improve myself and can increase to infinity my likeness to God, my heavenly blessedness to which I am predestined. Oh! prayer is the sign of the great dignity with which the Creator has honoured me. But at the same time it reminds me of my nothingness (I am nothing, and have nothing of my own; therefore, I ask God for everything) and of my most high dignity (I am an image of God; I am

made godly; I may be called the friend of God, like Abraham, the father of believers, if only I I believe undoubtingly in the existence, mercy, and omnipotence of my God, and strive to become like unto Him during this life by works of love and mercy).

Sometimes a man seems to pray fervently, but yet his prayer does not bring into his heart the fruits of peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Why is this? It is because in praying the appointed prayers he has not sincerely repented of those sins which he has committed during the day, by which he has defiled his heart, the temple of Christ, and by which he has angered the Lord. But had he remembered them, had he repented of them in all sincerity, and judged himself impartially, "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding,"[1] would immediately have entered into his heart. In the prayers of the Orthodox Church there is an enumeration of sins, but not of all; and often the very sins by which we have bound ourselves are not mentioned; therefore, we must absolutely enumerate them ourselves during our prayer, clearly recognising their gravity with a feeling of humility and heartfelt contrition. This is why, in the evening prayers at the enumeration of sins, it is said: "I have done wrong either in this or in that"—that is, it is left to our own will to make mention of these or those sins.

[1] Phil. iv. 7.

During prayer a sincere seeking after amendment is indispensable.

Pronounce the words of the prayer with heartfelt firmness. When praying in the evening, do not forget to confess in prayer to the Holy Ghost with all sincerity and contrition those sins into which you have fallen during the past day. A few moments of fervent repentance, and you will be cleansed by the Holy Ghost from every impurity; you will be whiter than snow, and tears, purifying the heart, will flow from your eyes; you will be covered with the garment of Christ's righteousness and united to Him, together with the Father and the Holy Ghost.

The insensibility of the heart during prayer to the truth of the words of the prayer proceeds from the heart's unbelief and insensibility, of its sinfulness; and these, in their turn, emanate from a secret feeling of pride. In accordance with the measure of his feelings during prayer a man recognises whether he is proud or humble; the more feeling, the more ardent the prayer is, the more humble he is; whilst the more unfeeling and cold it is, the prouder he is.

Lord! I am Thy vessel: fill me with the gifts of Thy Holy Spirit. Without Thee I am void of every blessing—or, rather, full of every sin. Lord! I am Thy ship: fill me with the cargo

of good works. Lord! I am Thy ark: fill me, not with the allurement of love of money and pleasures, but with love for Thee and Thy living image, man.

§ 4. Sincerity in Prayer.

If I incline unto wickedness with my heart, the Lord will not hear me.—Psalm lxvi. 16.

Many people pray hypocritically, and their hypocritical prayer becomes a habit with them; they do not even observe themselves, and do not wish to observe, that they pray hypocritically, and not in spirit and truth, so that if anybody were to accuse them of praying hypocritically, they would be angry with those who dared to say, in their opinion, such an absurdity. Men do not suddenly become hypocritical, but gradually. At first, perhaps, they prayed with their whole hearts, but afterwards—for always to pray with the whole heart is a difficult work, to which we must force ourselves, and "the kingdom of heaven" (it is said) "suffereth violence"[1]—they begin to pray more with their lips superficially, not from the depths of the soul, which is much easier; and finally, at the increased assaults of the flesh and devil, they only pray with their lips, without the power of the words of the prayer reaching the heart.

[1] S. Matt. xi. 12.

There are very many people who pray thus. The Lord said of them: "This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, and honoureth Me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me."[1] What is said concerning prayer equally applies to the communion of the holy, immortal, and life-giving Mysteries. At first, a man communicates with lively faith, with a feeling of love and devotion, but afterwards, at the continual opposition of the flesh and the devil to the truth of God, he lets them get the victory over him and communicates hypocritically, not of the Body and Blood, but in accordance with the thoughts of his heart, of bread and wine. The essence of the Mysteries, the spirit and life,[2] as the Saviour said, hath no place in him; he is thus inwardly robbed by Satan. May God preserve us all from such communion, from such blasphemy against the Lord! It is the same also with the sacrament of penitence.

Concerning hypocritical prayer. Did the Pharisees think that they prayed hypocritically? They did not think so; they considered themselves to be right in their hypocrisy itself! It had become their habit; it had become, so to say, their nature; and they thought they were serving God by their prayer. Do the Christian hypocrites of the present day think that they pray and live hypocritically? They do not think

[1] S. Matt. xv. 8; Isa. xxix. 13.
[2] S. John vi. 63.

so. They pray daily, perhaps long; they pray out of habit with their lips, but not with their hearts, without hearty contrition, without a firm desire for amendment, and only in order to fulfil the established rule, and "think" that they do "God service,"[1] whilst by their prayer they only incur the wrath of God. We all more or less sin in praying hypocritically, and shall be greatly censured for this. Humble yourself, consider yourself as the grass, which is nothing in comparison to the ancient oak-trees, or as a prickly thorn, which is nothing, which is worthless in comparison to the fragrant and delicate flowers; for you are indeed grass; you are indeed a prickly thorn, by reason of your passions.

It is sometimes necessary to ask a person who prays for himself, or for others, the following question in order to rouse his slumbering heart and conscience: "Are you in need of that for which you are apparently asking, and do you really desire to obtain it? Do you sincerely desire, for instance, amendment and holiness of life for yourself and others?"

How often it happens in life that a man has one thing in his heart and another upon his lips, and wears two faces at one and the same time. It is thus also during prayer, before God Himself, Who knows the secrets of the heart; a man also

[1] S. John xvi. 2.

frequently wears two faces, saying one thing and having another in his heart and thoughts. If, which happens still oftener, when saying a prayer, although he understands it and thinks about it, he does not sympathise in his heart with that which he is saying—being dead, and thus throwing the words to the air—then he deceives himself if he believes that he can please God by such a prayer. This is strange, sinful duplicity! It is a bitter fruit and evidence of our fall into sin. It seems habitual to our heart to lie in prayer and in our intercourse with other men. The heart is a pillar of falsehood. "All men are liars."[1] The Christian must make use of every means in order to eradicate every falsehood from his heart, and to implant pure truth within it. We must begin with prayer, as with a matter in which truth is indispensable before everything, in accordance with the Lord's own words: "Worship Him in spirit and in truth."[2] Speak the truth from your heart.[3] When we have learnt to speak the truth from our heart during prayer, we shall not allow ourselves to lie in our everyday life: sincere, true prayer, having cleansed our heart from falsehood, will protect it against falsehood in our relations with other men in worldly matters. How can we teach ourselves to speak the truth from our heart during prayer? We must bring every word of the prayer down to our heart, lay it to heart, feel its

[1] Psalm cxvi. 11. [2] S. John iv. 24.
[3] Psalm xv. 2.

truth in our heart, be convinced of all our need of that for which we ask God in prayer, or of the need of hearty gratitude for His great and innumerable benefits to us, and of most heartfelt praise for His great, most wise works in His creation.

Outward prayer is often performed at the expense of inward prayer, and inward at the expense of outward; that is, when I pray with my lips or read, if many words do not penetrate into the heart, I become double-minded and hypocritical; with my lips I say one thing, whilst in my heart I feel another. The lips speak truth, whilst the disposition of the heart does not agree with the words of the prayer. But if I pray inwardly, heartily, then, without paying attention to the pronunciation of the words, I concentrate it upon their contents, their power, gradually accustoming my heart to the truth, and thus entering into the same disposition of spirit in which the words of the prayer were written. In this way I accustom myself, little by little, to pray in spirit and truth in accordance with the words of the Eternal Truth: "They that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."[1] When a man prays outwardly aloud, then he cannot always follow all the movements of his heart, which are so rapid that he is necessarily obliged to pay attention to the pronunciation of the words, and to their outward

[1] S. John iv. 24

form. Thus the prayers of many of the clergy who read rapidly become quite untrue: with their lips they seem to pray; in appearance they are pious, but their hearts are asleep, and do not know what their lips say. This proceeds from the fact that they hurry, and do not meditate in their hearts upon what they are saying. We must pray for them, as they pray for us; we must pray that their words may penetrate into their hearts and breathe warmth into them. They pray for us in the words of holy persons, and we must pray for them also.

When praying, we must absolutely subject our heart to our will, and turn it towards God. It must be neither cold, crafty, untruthful, nor double-minded, otherwise what will be the use of our prayers, of our preparation for the Sacrament? It is good for us to hear God's voice of anger: "This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, and honoureth Me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me."[1] So do not let us stand in church in a state of spiritual prostration, but let the spirit of each one of us on such occasions burn in its working towards God. Even men do not much value the services which we render to them coldly, out of habit. And God requires our hearts. "My son, give Me thine heart."[2] Because the heart is the principal part of the man—his life. More than this, the heart is the man himself. Thus he who

[1] S. Matt. xv. 8. [2] Prov. xxiii. 26.

does not pray or does not serve God with his heart does not pray at all, because in that case his body only prays, and the body without the mind is nothing more than earth. Remember, that when standing in prayer, you stand before God Himself, Who has the wisdom of all. Therefore, your prayer ought to be, so to say, all spirit, all understanding.

Our heart often sleeps during prayer; the outer man prays, but not the inner one. We often only flatter with our tongue during prayer.

Sometimes people call prayer that which is not prayer at all; for instance, a man goes to church, stands there for a time, looks at the icons or at other people, their faces and dress, and says that he has prayed to God; or else he stands before an icon at home, bows his head, says some words he has learnt by heart, without understanding and without feeling, and says that he has prayed, although with his thoughts and heart he has not prayed at all, but was elsewhere with other people and things, and not with God.

Forced prayer develops hypocrisy, renders a man incapable of any occupation requiring meditation, and makes him slothful in everything, even in fulfilling his duties. This should persuade all who pray in this manner to correct their mode of praying. We must pray gladly,

with energy, from the whole heart. Do not pray to God only when you are obliged to, either in sorrow or in need, for "God loveth a cheerful giver."[1]

Let us measure the worth of our prayers by human measure or by the quality of our relation to other men. How do we behave to other people? Sometimes we express our requests, praises and gratitude to them coldly, heartlessly, out of duty or simply out of politeness, and it is the same when we do anything for them; whilst at other times we do so with warmth, heartily, and lovingly, often only feigning, often really sincerely. We are similarly unequal with God. But this should not be. We must always, from our whole hearts, sing and express to God our praises, our gratitude and our requests; every work must be done before Him with the whole heart. He must be loved and trusted with the whole heart.

During prayer always firmly believe and remember that every thought and word of yours may, undoubtedly, become deeds. "For with God nothing shall be impossible."[2] "But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit."[3] This signifies that even your words shall not be without power. "All things are possible to him that believeth."[4] Take heed of your words;

[1] 2 Cor. ix. 7.
[2] S. Luke i. 37.
[3] 1 Cor. vi. 17.
[4] S. Mark ix. 23.

the word is precious. "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." [1]

Is it possible to pray rapidly without injuring the effect of the prayer? It is possible to those who have learned to pray inwardly with a pure heart. During prayer it is necessary that your heart should sincerely desire that which you ask for, should feel the truth of what you are saying, and this comes naturally to a pure heart. That is why it is capable of praying even rapidly, and at the same time agreeably, to God, as the rapidity in this case does not injure the truth (sincerity) of the prayer. But for those who have not attained the capability of praying sincerely it is necessary to pray slowly, waiting for a corresponding echo in the heart to each word of the prayer. And this is not always soon given to men unaccustomed to prayerful contemplation. Therefore, for such men, it must be laid down as an absolute rule to pronounce the words of the prayer slowly, and with pauses. Wait until every word gives back its corresponding echo in your heart.

[1] S. Matt. xii. 36.

§ 5. Perseverance in Prayer.

The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.—S. Matt. xi. 12.

It is said that we soon grow weary of praying. Wherefore? Because we do not vividly represent to ourselves the Lord, Who is at our right hand. Look upon Him unceasingly with the eyes of your heart, and then, even if you stand praying all night, you will not grow weary. What do I say—all night? You will be able to stand thus praying two and three nights without growing weary. Remember the Stylites. They stood for many years in a prayerful disposition of soul on pillars or columns, and mastered their flesh, which was the same as yours, and which was also inclined to slothfulness. And you feel oppressed by a few hours' public prayers, even by one hour's prayers.

You are praying, your prayer is successfully accomplished, and you have inward proof that the Lord hears it and deigns to receive it favourably; your thoughts are at peace, you feel lightness and sweetness in your heart; but at the end of your prayer, through some slight infirmity of your heart and thoughts, a heavy burden falls on your heart, a weakening fire, and you feel an extreme difficulty in praying, and even an aversion to it, instead of the former lightness and inclination to prayer. Do not

despair, friend; these are only the snares of the enemy, who loves to mock at us, especially at the end of our pious employment, so that we may fall into despondency and consider all our previous labours in the holy work lost. Learn from this in future not to extinguish your spirit even for a moment during your prayer; pray in spirit and truth, unremittingly, and not flattering the Lord during prayer by one single word—that is, not pronouncing a single word feignedly, hypocritically; let your prayer be only the expression of truth, the mouthpiece of the Holy Ghost, and do not let it serve by a single word the enemy's lie, nor be in any way the organ of the Devil. And to release your soul from his heavy load and to extinguish his fire, pray fervently to God, heartily confessing your fault before Him—your hypocrisy during prayer—and you will obtain relief and peace. Do not hurry; say and do everything calmly. You will succeed. It is the enemy who hurries and disturbs us, for there is no sense in confused hurry.

People say that if you feel no inclination to pray, it is better not to pray; but this is crafty, carnal sophistry. If you only pray when you are inclined to, you will completely cease praying; this is what the flesh desires. "The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence."[1] You will not be able to work out your salvation without forcing yourself.

[1] S. Matt. xi 12.

Learn to pray; force yourself to prayer. In the beginning it will be difficult; but afterwards the more you force yourself, the easier it will be for you to pray. But in the beginning it is always necessary to force oneself.

Our heart daily dies spiritually. Only ardent, tearful prayer quickens it, and makes it begin to breathe again. If we do not daily pray with sufficient spiritual fervour, we may easily and speedily die spiritually.

When some inward disturbance or weakness of the heart prevents your pronouncing the words of the prayers during Divine service, then consider such disturbance and weakness as an illusion of the enemy, of the demon; throw aside the despondency, the faint-heartedness, and timidity, and speak concerning the name of the Lord without hurrying, calmly and intentionally louder; you will thus overcome your disturbance and weakness, and will obtain courage and strength. Everything is possible unto those who believe and trust. We must struggle and conquer.

Some one, when, during prayer, he became languid and feeble in mind and body, and longed to sleep, roused himself by the following inward question: With Whom art thou conversing, my soul? And after this, by vividly representing the Lord before him, he began to pray with great feeling and tears; his blunted

attention was sharpened, his mind and heart were enlightened, and he himself wholly revived. This shows what it is to represent the Lord God vividly to ourselves, and to walk in His presence! If—he went on to say—my soul, thou darest not converse languidly and carelessly with men above thyself in station, in order not to offend them, then how darest thou converse languidly and carelessly with the Lord?

Our soul, as a spiritual, active being, cannot remain idle; it either does good or evil, one of the two; either wheat grows in it or tares. But as every good comes from God, and as the means of obtaining every good from God is prayer, those who pray fervently, sincerely, from the depths of their hearts, obtain from the Lord grace to do good, and, before all, the grace of faith; whilst those who do not pray, naturally remain without these spiritual gifts, voluntarily depriving themselves of them by their own negligence and spiritual coldness; and as the wheat of good thoughts, inclinations, intentions, and works grows in the hearts of those who labour and pray fervently to the Lord, so in the hearts of those who do not pray the tares of every evil grow, smothering the small amount of good that has remained in them from the grace of baptism, chrism, and subsequent penitence and communion. Therefore, we must most carefully look after the field of our heart, lest the tares of evil, slothfulness, luxuriousness, self-

indulgence, unbelief, avarice, envy, hatred, and others, should grow within it; we must daily weed the field of our heart—at least, at morning and evening prayers—and refresh it by salutary sighs, as by healthful winds, and water it with abundant tears, as by early and late rain. Besides this, we must by every means implant in the field of our heart the seeds of the virtues, faith, hope in God, and love for God and our neighbour, fertilise it by prayer, patience, good works, and not for a single hour remain in complete idleness and inactivity, for in times of idleness and inactivity the enemy zealously sows his tares. "While men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way."[1] We must also remember that it is impossible to do good works without efforts. Since our voluntary falling into sin the Kingdom of God cannot be taken otherwise than by "violence, and the violent take it by force."[2] Why is it that only the narrow way and narrow gate lead to life? Who makes the way of the chosen narrow? The world oppresses the chosen, the devil oppresses them, the flesh oppresses them; it is these that make our way to the Kingdom of Heaven narrow.

Do not spare yourself, but pray earnestly, even if you have been toiling all day. Do not be negligent in holy prayer; say it to God unto the end from your whole heart, for it is a duty

[1] S. Matt. xiii. 25. [2] S. Matt. xi. 12.

you owe to God. Having put your hand to the plough, do not look back.[1] If you allow yourself to pray carelessly, and not from your heart, you will not fall asleep (if you pray at night) until you have wiped out by tears your sin before God. This is not so with everybody, however, but only with the more perfect. Take care, then, not to put your flesh before God, and disdain, for His sake, bodily repose. If you have made a rule to read so many prayers (whether they be long or short, fulfil the reading of all of them well), read the prayers with all conscientiousness, and do not do God's work with your heart divided in two, so that only one half belongs to Him and the remaining half to your own flesh. God is a jealous God, and will not suffer your duplicity, your self-pity. He will deliver you up to the Devil, and the Devil will not let your heart rest for your neglect of God, Who is the true peace of your heart, and Who will always do that which is for your own good, so as to keep your heart near Him; for every insincere prayer removes your heart from God and sets it in opposition to you yourself, whilst every earnest prayer draws your heart nearer to God and makes it perpetually godly. Thus, be assured, if you hurry over your prayers to give rest to your body, you will lose both spiritual and bodily rest. Oh! by what labour, sweat, and tears is the approach of our heart to God gained!

[1] S. Luke ix. 62.

Is it possible that we should again make our very prayers (when careless) the means of our estrangement from God, and that God should not be jealous of this? For He pities us and our former labours, and He desires that we should again unfailingly turn to Him with our whole hearts. He wishes that we should always belong to Him.

§ 6. Hindrances to Prayer.

And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him.—Zech. iii. 1.

During prayer there sometimes occur moments of deadly darkness and spiritual anguish arising from unbelief of the heart (for unbelief is darkness). Do not let your heart fail you at such moments, but remember that if the Divine light has been cut off from you, it always shines in all its splendour and greatness in God Himself, in God's Church, in heaven and on earth, and in the material world in which "His eternal power and Godhead" are visible.[1] Do not think that truth has failed, because truth is God Himself, and everything that exists has its foundation and reason in Him. Only your own weak, sinful and darkened heart can fail in the truth, for it cannot always bear the strength of the light of truth, and is not always capable of containing its purity, but

[1] Rom. i. 20.

only if it is being or has been purified from its sins, as the first cause of spiritual darkness. The proof of this you may find in yourself. When the light of faith or God's truth dwells in your heart, only then is it tranquil, firm, strong, and living; but when this is cut off, then your heart becomes uneasy, weak as a reed shaken by the wind, and lifeless. Do not pay any attention to this darkness of Satan. Drive it away from your heart by making the sign of the life-giving Cross!

When you are praying alone, and your spirit is dejected, and you are wearied and oppressed by your loneliness, remember then, as always, that God the Trinity looks upon you with eyes brighter than the sun; also all the angels, your own Guardian Angel, and all the saints of God. Truly they do; for they are all one in God, and where God is there are they also. Where the sun is thither also are directed all its rays. Try to understand what this means. Always pray with a fervent heart; and to attain to this, never eat and drink excessively. Remember with Whom you are conversing. Men very often forget with Whom they are conversing during prayer, Who are the witnesses of their prayer. They forget that they are conversing with the Vigilant and the All-seeing God; that all the Heavenly Powers and the saints of God are listening to their converse.

When praying, a man must lay aside every

worldly care and only care for the salvation of his soul.

Those who pray little are weak in heart, and thus, when they wish to pray, their hearts become enfeebled, also their hands, body, and thoughts, and it is difficult for them to pray. It is necessary to overcome oneself, to strive to pray with the whole heart, for it is a good and happy thing to pray with the whole heart.

When praying, keep to the rule that it is better to say five words from the depth of your heart than ten thousand words with your tongue only. When you observe that your heart is cold and prays unwillingly, stop praying and warm your heart by vividly representing to yourself either your own wickedness, your spiritual poverty, misery, and blindness, or the great benefits which God bestows every moment upon you and all mankind, especially upon Christians, and then pray slowly and fervently. If you have not time to say all the prayers, it does not matter, and you will receive incomparably greater benefit from praying fervently and not hurriedly than if you had said all your prayers hurriedly and without feeling: "I had rather speak five words with my understanding . . . than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue." [1] But it would, of course, have been very well had we been able to say these ten thousand words in prayer with

[1] 1 Cor. xiv. 19.

due understanding and feeling. The Lord does not forsake those who labour for Him and who stand long before Him; for with what measure they mete, He will measure to them again, and He will reward them for the abundance of the sincere words of their prayer by sending into their souls a corresponding abundance of spiritual light, warmth, peace, and joy. It is well to pray long and continually; but "All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given."[1] It is better for those who are not capable of long prayers to say short prayers, but with a fervent spirit.

When you are saying your prayers—and especially if you have a rule of prayer according to a book—do not hurry from one word to another without feeling its truth, without laying it to your heart, but always strive to feel with your heart the truth of that which you say. Your heart will oppose this—sometimes by slothfulness and stony insensibility to that which you are saying, sometimes by doubt and unbelief, by a kind of inward fire and oppression, sometimes by distraction and deviation of the mind to earthly objects and cares, sometimes by the remembrance of the offences of your neighbour, and by a feeling of revenge and hatred towards him, sometimes by the representation of worldly pleasures, or the representation of pleasure derived from reading novels and, in

[1] S. Matt. xix. 11.

general, worldly books. Do not be self-loving; conquer your heart, and offer it to God as an acceptable sacrifice: "My son, give Me thine heart,"[1] and your prayer will unite you to God and all heaven, and you will be filled with the Spirit, and the fruits of the Spirit: righteousness, peace, joy, love, meekness, long-suffering, and hearty compunction. You want to finish your rule of prayer quickly, in order to give rest to your weary body? Pray fervently, and you will sleep the most peaceful, quiet, and healthy sleep. Do not hurry, then, nor say your prayers anyhow; by half-an-hour's prayer you will gain three whole hours of the soundest sleep. Are you hurrying to get to the place of your service or your work? Get up earlier; do not sleep so long; and pray fervently—you will thus obtain tranquillity, energy, and success in your work for the whole day. Is your heart impatient to go to vain, worldly matters? Master it; let its treasure be not earthly vanity, but God; teach your heart to attach itself through prayer to God, and not to worldly vanity, so that you may not be covered with shame in the day of sickness, and in the hour of death, like him who was rich in worldly vanity and poor in faith, hope, and love. If you do not pray as I have said, then you will neither prosper in life, nor in faith, nor in spiritual understanding.

Trust in prayer consists in uttering the

[1] Prov. xxiii. 26.

petitions, thanksgivings, and praise with faith in the presence of God, and of His hearing them; and with the fear of God, not doubting, nor being in the least uneasy as to their acceptance and fulfilment, but in absolute assurance that God has heard them and accepted them upon His heavenly and mental Altar; and that, in accordance with the desire of our Mother the Church (if we pray in the name of the Church), as well as of our own heart, He will give us, as the all-good Almighty and most wise, all that we ask, and more abundantly than we ask or mean. But the heart that has a partiality for food and drink, that is greedy for these, and is weakened by them, has not such trust; neither the heart in which hatred and animosity are concealed, nor that is bound by avarice, covetousness, and envy, until it puts away its infirmities and amends itself.

There are many people who pray in such a manner that they seem to worship God in vain. There are also some persons who pray, and they are so slothful and evil that when they feel an influx of impure and evil thoughts in their heart and head, they immediately leave off praying and flee from the church, or from before the icon in their home.

He who says prayers hurriedly, without hearty understanding and feeling, being conquered by his slothful, sleepy flesh, does not serve God

but serves his own flesh, his self-love, and reviles God by his inattention and the indifference of his heart to prayer: "God is a spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth"[1]—not hypocritically. However slothful and weak your flesh may be, however inclined to sleep you may be, conquer yourself; do not spare yourself for God; renounce yourself; let your gift to God be perfect; give God your heart.

As after having unworthily communicated, so also after having prayed unworthily and coldly, our soul feels equally ill at ease. This means that God does not enter our heart, being offended at its unbelief and coldness, and allows the evil spirit to nestle in our hearts, in order to make us feel the difference between His own presence and its yoke.

Sometimes during prayer you feel a kind of estrangement from God, and despair. Do not be carried away by such a feeling; it proceeds from the Devil. Say in your heart: "I despair not of salvation, reprobate as I am; and emboldened by Thine immeasurable compassion, I come unto Thee. If there is any hope of salvation for me, if Thy loving mercy can overcome the multitude of my transgressions, be Thou my Saviour."[2]

[1] S. John iv. 24.

[2] First and fourth prayers before the Holy Communion.

When praying with people, we sometimes have to pierce through with our prayer as if it were the hardest wall—human souls, hardened and petrified by earthly passions—to penetrate the Egyptian darkness, the darkness of passions and worldly attachments. This is why it is sometimes difficult to pray. The simpler the people one prays with the easier it is.

§ 7. Intercession.

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men.—1 Tim. ii. 1.

Pray for others as you would pray for yourself, for we are one, as the children of the Heavenly Father.

When you pray, endeavour to pray more for others than for yourself alone, and during prayer represent to yourself vividly all men as forming one body with yourself, and each separately as a member of the Body of Christ and your own member, "for we are members one of another."[1] Pray for all as you would pray for yourself, with the same sincerity and fervour; look upon their infirmities and sicknesses as your own; their spiritual ignorance, their sins and passions, as your own; their temptations, misfortunes, and manifold afflictions as your own. Such prayer will be accepted

[1] Eph. iv. 25.

with great favour by the Heavenly Father, that most gracious, common Father of all, with Whom "there is no respect of persons,"[1] "no variableness,"[2] that boundless Love that embraces and preserves all creatures.

When you see faults and passions in your neighbour, pray for him; pray for everybody, even for your enemy. If you see that your brother is proud and stubborn, and behaves proudly either to you or others, pray for him, that God may enlighten his mind and warm his heart with the fire of His grace, and say: "Lord, teach meekness and humility to Thy servant, who has fallen into Satan's pride, and drive from his heart the darkness and burden of the evil one's pride." If you see a wrathful brother, pray thus: "Lord, make this servant of Thine good through Thy grace." If a mercenary and greedy one, pray thus: "Lord, Thou Who art our incorruptible Treasury and inexhaustible Riches, grant that this servant of Thine, created according to Thy image, may recognise the deceitfulness of riches, and that, like all earthly things, they are vain, fleeting, delusive. For the days of men are like grass, or like the spider's web, and Thou alone art our riches, peace, and joy." If you see an envious man, pray Thus: "Lord, enlighten the mind and the heart of this Thy servant, that he may recognise the great, innumerable, and unsearchable gifts which he

[1] Rom. ii. 11. [2] S. James. i. 17.

has received through Thy boundless generosity; for in the blindness of his passion he has forgotten Thee and Thy rich gifts, and although enriched with Thy benefits, yet he reckons himself poor, and looks enviously upon the blessings which Thou, O our unspeakable Benefactor, hast bestowed upon each one of Thy servants, even against their own will, but in accordance with Thy purpose. Take away, most gracious Master, the Devil's veil from the eyes of the heart of Thy servant; grant him contrition of heart, tears of repentance and gratitude, so that the enemy who has ensnared him alive in his toils may not rejoice over him and may not wrest him from Thy hands." If you see a drunken man, say in your heart: "Lord, look mercifully upon Thy servant, allured by the flattery of the belly and by carnal merriment; make him understand the sweetness of temperance and fasting, and of the fruit of the spirit arising therefrom." When you see a man passionately fond of eating, and finding all his happiness in this, say: "Lord, Thou art our sweetest food, that never perishes, but leads us unto life eternal! Purify Thy servant from the filthiness of gluttony, so carnal and so far from Thy Spirit, and grant that he may know the sweetness of Thy Life-giving, spiritual food, which is Thy Flesh and Blood, and Thy holy, living, and acting word." In this or in a similar manner pray for all who sin, and do not dare to despise any one for his sin, nor be vindictive, as through this you would only aggra-

vate the wounds of those who sin; but rather correct them by means of such advice, threats, and punishments as may tend to stop or restrain the evil within the limits of moderation.

Do not let pass any opportunity for praying for any man, either at his request or at the request of his relatives, friends, of those who esteem him, or of his acquaintances. The Lord looks favourably upon the prayer of our love, and upon our boldness before him. Besides this, prayer for others is very beneficial to the man himself who prays for others; it purifies the heart, strengthens faith and hope in God, and enkindles our love for God and our neighbour. When praying, say thus: "Lord, it is possible for Thee to do this or that to this servant of Thine; do this for him, for Thy name is the Merciful Lover of Men and the Almighty." "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts [not only] unto your children [but also to strangers], how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give [all possible] good things to them that ask Him?"[1]

When you are saying a prayer for all men, and not praying from your heart for all men, then your soul is oppressed, for God does not favour such prayer; but as soon as you begin to pray for all men from your heart, then you will immediately feel relieved, for the Lord listens mercifully to such prayers.

[1] S. Matt. vii. 11.

When you are struck by other people's suffering, and the contraction of their souls, so that you are induced to pray for them with a pitying and contrite heart, pray to God to have mercy upon them and to forgive them their sins, as you would pray for the forgiveness of your own sins—that is, implore God with tears to pardon them; likewise pray for the salvation of others as you would pray for your own salvation. If you attain to this and make it a habit, you will receive from God an abundance of spiritual gifts, the gifts of the Holy Ghost, Who loves the soul that cares for the salvation of others, because He Himself, the most Holy Spirit, wishes to save us all in every possible way, if only we do not oppose Him and do not harden our hearts. "The Spirit Itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."[1]

When you are asked to pray that some one may be saved from bodily death, for instance, from drowning, from death through any sickness, from fire, or from any other disaster, commend the faith of those who ask you to do so, and say in yourself: "Blessed be your faith, according to your faith may the Lord fulfil my unworthy, feeble prayer, and may He increase my faith."

If you wish to correct any one from his faults, do not think of correcting him solely by your

[1] Rom. viii. 26.

own means: you would only do harm by your own passions, for instance, by pride and by the irritability arising from it; "but cast thy burden upon the Lord,"[1] and pray to God, Who "trieth the hearts and reins,"[2] with all your heart, that He Himself may enlighten the mind and heart of that man. If He sees that your prayer breathes love, and that it really comes from the depth of your heart, He will infallibly fulfil the desire of your heart, and you yourself will soon tell, seeing the change that has taken place in him for whom you have prayed, that it is the work of the right hand of God, the most High.

It is pleasing to the Lord, as to a most loving Father, when we pray for others—His children; and as parents, at the request of their good and well-principled children, forgive their wicked, capricious, and evil-natured ones, so also the Heavenly Father, at the prayer of those "that are His," or at the prayer for the people of His priests, invested with His grace, has mercy even upon the unworthy, as He had mercy upon and forgave the rebellious and murmuring Hebrew people in the desert at Moses' prayer. But what an ardent prayer that was!

When you pray either aloud or to yourself for others—for instance, for the members of your

[1] Psalm lv. 22. [2] Psalm vii. 9.

household or for strangers, even though they may not have asked you to do so—pray for them with the same ardour and zeal as you would pray for yourself. Remember the commandment of the law: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."[1] Observe this rule upon all occasions—that is, love your neighbour as yourself. Do not try to deal cunningly with the Lord, "that triest the reins and the heart,"[2] lest He should despise your prayer as vain and lying.

Why has our sincere prayer for each other such great power over others? Because of the fact that by cleaving to God during prayer I become one spirit with Him, and unite with myself, by faith and love, those for whom I pray; for the Holy Ghost acting in me also acts at the same time in them, for He accomplishes all things. "We being many are one bread, and one body."[3] "There is one Body, and one Spirit."[4]

Pray to the Lord for the repose of the souls of your departed forefathers, fathers and brothers, daily in the morning and in the evening, in order that the remembrance of death may live in you, and that hope in the future life, after death, may not be extinguished in you, and that your spirit

[1] S. Matt. xix. 19, xxii. 39; Lev. xix. 18.
[2] Jer. xi. 20; Rev. ii. 23.
[3] 1 Cor. x. 17.
[4] Eph. iv. 4.

may be daily humbled by the thought of the transitoriness of your life.

When we pray for the living and for the departed, and mention them by name, we must pronounce these names lovingly, and from the whole heart, as though we carried in our souls the persons whose names we mention, "even as a nurse cherisheth her children,"[1] remembering that they are our members, and members of the Lord's body.[2] It is not right to stand before God and merely run over their names with the tongue without the heart's participation and love. We must remember that God sees into the heart; that the persons for whom we pray also require from us brotherly love and sympathy as a Christian duty. There is a great difference between the apathetic repetition of names and their hearty remembrance: the one is as far from the other as heaven from earth. But, above all, the name of the Lord Himself, that of His most pure Mother, and those of the holy angels and saints, must always be pronounced from a pure heart with burning faith and love; in general, the words of the prayer must not be merely run over with the tongue as if we were turning over the leaves of a book or counting money, the water must flow like a stream of living water from its source —they should be the sincere voice of the heart, not a strange, borrowed garment.

[1] 1 Thess. ii. 7. [2] Eph. iv. 25, v. 30.

Lord! grant that I may ever pour forth my supplications to Thee for the whole world and for the fulfilment of the requests of the whole Church, with all comprehensive, unfeigned love, for by Thy grace I have to pray for the sins of all and for mine own. Grant, O Lord, God the Father, that I may contemplate Thine unspeakable love unto the world, manifested in giving unto us Thy beloved Only-begotten Son. Grant, O God, Son of God, that I may contemplate Thine exhaustion in the world and on the cross for the sake of our salvation; grant, O God, the Holy Ghost, that I may contemplate Thy grace, abundantly outpoured and still being outpoured upon the world, for the sake of the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ, and so often filling even my sinful heart; O Holy Trinity, grant that I may continually glorify Thee with my heart and mouth, and above all by my deeds!

§ 8. Thanksgiving and Spiritual Joy.

Praised be God Who hath not cast out my prayer; nor turned His mercy from me.—Psalm lxvi. 20.

As often as I prayed with faith, the Lord always heard me and fufilled my prayers.

How easily and speedily the Lord can save us!—instantaneously, unexpectedly, imperceptible

ibly. Often during the day I have been a great sinner, and at night, after prayer, I have gone to rest, justified and whiter than snow by the grace of the Holy Ghost, with the deepest peace and joy in my heart! How easy it will be for the Lord to save us too in the evening of our life, at the decline of our days! Oh, save, save, save me, most gracious Lord; receive me in Thy heavenly Kingdom! Everything is possible to Thee. "To his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for the Lord is able to make him stand."[1]

Our hope of obtaining that which we ask for during prayer is founded upon faith in God's mercy and bountifulness, for He is the God of mercy and bountifulness, and the Lover of men; therefore at that time it is useful to remind ourselves of former innumerable experiences of mercy and grace bestowed upon men (in Holy Writ and in the lives of the saints) and upon ourselves. Besides this, in order that prayer may be effectual it is also necessary that those who pray should have already obtained that which they formerly asked for, and firmly believe this with their whole heart. We often receive through prayer that which we have asked for, especially when we pray for that which relates to the salvation of our soul; it is necessary to ascribe this directly to God and His grace, and not to chance. How can there possibly be any

[1] Rom. xiv. 4.

chance in the Kingdom of the Almighty God? Nothing can really happen without His will, as "without Him was not anything made that was made."[1] Many do not pray because it seems to them that they did not receive any gift from God when they prayed before, or because they consider praying unnecessary; they say that God knows everything without our asking, and forget that it is said: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."[2] Our requests (prayers) are necessary expressly to strengthen our faith, through which alone can we be saved. "By grace are ye saved through faith."[3] "O woman, great is thy faith."[4] For this reason the Lord made the woman pray earnestly, in order to awaken her faith and to strengthen it. Such men do not see that they have no faith—the Christian's most precious inheritance, which is as necessary as life itself—that they "make Him a liar"[5] by their unbelief, and that they are the children of the Devil, unworthy of any of God's mercies; that they are going to destruction. It is also necessary that our hearts should burn during prayer with a desire for spiritual blessings with love to God, and that we should vividly represent to ourselves His extreme mercy to mankind, and His readiness to hear all our prayers with fatherly love. "If ye then, being

[1] S. John i. 3.
[2] S. Matt. vii. 7.
[3] Eph. ii. 8.
[4] S. Matt. xv. 28.
[5] 1 S. John i. 10.

evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?"[1]

Prayer is the constant feeling of our own spiritual poverty and infirmity, the contemplation in ourselves, in others, and in nature of the works of the great wisdom, mercy, and almighty power of God; prayer is—a continually grateful frame of mind.

You are a being who has fallen of your own free will, corrupted by sins; this ought to be the most powerful incentive for you to prayer. You daily receive the greatest mercies from God; this ought to be a powerful incentive to thank God. You daily contemplate the works of the omnipotence, wisdom and goodness of God; this ought also to be an incentive to daily praise.

He who prays must hunger after, must ardently desire those blessings—especially the spiritual ones—the forgiveness of sins, the cleansing, the sanctification, the strengthening in virtue, for which he prays; otherwise, it will be a useless waste of words. The same applies to thanking and praising the Lord; hunger and thirst to constantly thank and praise the Lord, for everything comes from Him, everything is the gift of His goodness and mercy.

[1] S. Matt. vii. 11.

Concerning praise. The soul involuntarily longs to praise when we gaze upon the starry sky; but still more when, in looking upon the sky and the stars, we represent to ourselves God's providence towards men, how infinitely He loves men, cares for their eternal beatitude, not having even spared His only-begotten Son for our salvation and our repose in the Heavenly Kingdom! It is impossible not to praise God when you remember that you were created from nothing, that you were predestined from the foundation of the world for eternal blessedness, quite without cause, not in accordance with your merits—when you remember what grace God has bestowed upon you for your salvation during all your lifetime, what an innumerable multitude of sins are forgiven you, and this not once or twice but an incalculable number of times, what a multitude of natural gifts are bestowed upon you, beginning with health down to the current of air, down to the drop of water. We are involuntarily incited to praise when we see with wonder the infinite variety of things created on the earth, in the animal kingdom, in the vegetable kingdom, and in the mineral kingdom. What wise order in all, both in great and small! We involuntarily praise and exclaim: "O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! in wisdom hast Thou made them all": Glory to Thee, Lord, Who hast created everything![1]

[1] Psalm civ. 24.

Thank God every day with your whole heart for having given to you life according to His image and likeness—an intelligently free and immortal life. Especially thank God for having restored and guided you again unto life eternal after you had fallen into eternal death, and for having done so not simply by the action of His omnipotence, for this would not have been in comformity to His justice, but by having given for our redemption His only begotten Son, Who suffered and died for us. Thank Him also for again daily bestowing life upon you, who have fallen an innumerable multitude of times, by your own free will, through sins, from life into death, and that He does so as soon as you only say from your whole heart: "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before Thee!"[1] Thank Him also for often delivering you from sickness, you who imprudently throw yourself into danger and sickness, the precursors of bodily death, for correcting your faults, and for not depriving you of earthly life, knowing that it is dear to you, and that you are not yet ready for the future, eternal life. Thank Him for all your means of existence, for all the joys and sorrows of life; for everything is from Him, the All-merciful Father; everything comes from the First Origin of Life, Who has apportioned and lent life to all.

The sign of the Lord's mercy or of that of

[1] S. Luke xv. 18.

His most pure Mother to us, after or during prayer, is peace of heart, especially after the action of some passion, whose property is the absence of spiritual peace. By this peace of heart and a kind of holy tenderness of heart we can also easily recognise that our prayer has been heard, and that the grace asked in it has been granted to us. The success of the prayer is also recognised by the spiritual power, which we inwardly obtain for the fulfilment of the duties of our calling, and by the inward light manifestly entering into our soul.

Prayer refreshes and enlivens the soul, like outer air refreshes the body. When praying we feel braver and brighter, similarly as we feel physically and spiritually braver and fresher while walking in the fresh air.

Believe as undoubtingly that God sees you, as you believe that your father, or any one else standing face to face with you, sees you, only with this difference, that the Heavenly Father sees everything that is in you, entirely what you are, and all creatures, the angels, the saints, us sinners, the animals—sees everything at once in the same way as the sun lights everything at once, besides which "The eyes of the Lord are ten thousand times brighter than the sun."[1] A lively sense of God's presence is a source of peace and joy for the soul. Doubt in His presence

[1] Ecclus. xxiii. 19.

produces distress, affliction, and oppression. Heartfelt prayer is the source of peace of heart, whilst insincere, superficial, inattentive prayer wounds the heart.

Prayer is a golden link connecting the Christian man, the wanderer and the stranger upon earth, with the spiritual world of which he is a member, and, above all, with God the Source of life. The soul came forth from God, and to God may it ever ascend through prayer. There is great benefit from prayer to those who pray: it gives rest to the soul and the body; it gives rest not only to the soul of him who prays ("I will give you rest")[1] but also to the souls of our departed forefathers, to our fathers and brothers. See how important prayer is!

Sometimes during a long-continued prayer only a few minutes are really pleasing to God and constitute true prayer and true service to God. The chief thing in prayer is the nearness of the heart to God, as proved by the sweetness of God's presence in the soul.

When praying fervently, either standing or sitting, or lying down or walking, and being sometimes suddenly visited by the Spirit of God and hearing His voice, we notice that He penetrates into the soul, not through the mouth, not through the nose, neither through the ears

[1] S. Matt. xi. 28.

(although the Saviour bestowed the Spirit through the word and breathing, and although "faith cometh by hearing"), but straight through the body into the heart, in the same manner as the Lord passed through the walls of the house when He came to the Apostles after the Resurrection, and acts suddenly, like electricity, and more rapidly than any electric current; then we feel unusually light, because we are suddenly freed from our burden of sins, the spirit of contrition for sins, the spirit of devotion, peace, and joy visits us. Remember how the angel appeared in the shut-up prison in order to deliver the Apostle Peter; the doors were shut, the keepers standing before the doors, but the angel suddenly came upon him, and at the same moment a light shined in the prison. Thus the Spirit of God suddenly visits the chamber of our soul, the body, and the light shines in it.

"He shall call upon Me, and I will hear him."[1] O words most full of love! O words breathing lively trust into him who prays!

Sometimes we stand praying in church or at home, in a state of spiritual and bodily prostration; then powerless, cold, unfruitful is our soul, like some heathen, unfruitful temple; but as soon as we make an effort, and force our heart to sincere prayer to God, turn our thoughts and heart towards Him with living faith, our soul

[1] Psalm xci. 15.

immediately becomes vivified, warm, and fruitful. What sudden tranquillity, what lightness, what emotion, what inward holy fire, what tears for our sins, what a sincere feeling of sorrow that by them we have displeased the Most Merciful Master; what light in the heart and mind, what an abundant stream of living water is diffused in the heart, flowing freely from the tongue, or from the pen and pencil, if we are writing, upon the paper! The wilderness of the soul blossoms like a lily at the coming of the Lord into the heart. Oh, why do we not turn our hearts oftener towards the Lord? How much peace and comfort ever lie concealed in Him for us! "Oh, how great is Thy goodness, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee!"[1]

"It is good for me to draw near to God,"[2] said David, who had tasted the sweetness of prayer and praising God. Other men confirm this, and I a sinner also. Observe, even here on earth, to draw near to God is a good and blessed thing (while we are yet in the sinful flesh, which has much that is agreeable and disagreeable in itself). Therefore, what blessedness it will be to be united to God there, in heaven! And the blessedness of union with God here on earth is a specimen and pledge of the blessedness of union with God after death, in eternity. You see, then, how good, merciful, and true the

[1] Psalm xxxi. 19. [2] Psalm lxxiii. 28.

Creator is! In order to assure you of the future blessedness proceeding from union with Him, He allows you to experience the beginning of this blessedness here on earth when you approach Him sincerely. Yes; even here my invisible soul rests in the invisible God; therefore it will still more perfectly rest in Him when it is separated from the body.

It is sometimes well during prayer to say a few words of our own, breathing fervent faith and love to the Lord. Yes, let us not always converse with God in the words of others, not always remain children in faith and hope; we must also show our own mind, indite a good matter from our own heart also. Moreover, we grow too much accustomed to the words of others and grow cold in prayer. And how pleasing to the Lord this lisping of our own is, coming directly from a believing, loving, and thankful heart. It is impossible to explain this: it is only needful to say that when you are praying to God with your own words the soul trembles with joy, it becomes wholly inflamed, vivified, and beatified. You will utter few words, but you will experience such blessedness as you would not have obtained from saying the longest and most touching prayers of others pronounced out of habit and insincerely.

Wherever I am, as soon as I raise the eyes of my heart in my affliction to God, the Lover

of men immediately answers my faith and prayer, and the sorrow immediately departs. He is at every time and every hour near me, only I do not see it, but I feel it vividly in my heart. Sorrow is the death of the heart, and it is a falling away from God. The expansion, the peace of heart through lively faith in Him, prove more clearly than the day that God is constantly present near me, and that He dwells within me. What intercessor or angel can set us free from our sins or sorrows? None, but God alone. This is from experience.

I thank Thee, my Lord, my Master, and my Judge, for teaching me how to pray simply to Thee, for hearing my calling upon Thee, for saving me from my sins and sorrows, and for rightly directing my ways. I called upon Thee (in the sin of my wickedness) in the words of the Church prayer: "O Lord, our God, Who grantest forgiveness unto men through repentance. . ." And as soon as I finished this prayer, peace and lightness established themselves in my soul (June 29th, 1864).

CHAPTER III

THE TEMPLE AND ITS SERVICES.

§ 1. The House of God.

Lord, I have loved the habitation of Thy house, and the place where Thine honour dwelleth.—Psalm xxvi. 8.

"Mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually,"[1] is said of the Temple; *there*, that is, chiefly in the hearts of those assisting and praying in the Temple, for the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands. How comforting it is to read these words of the wise King Solomon! The eyes of the Master in God's temple are turned upon each of us, His heart is turned to each of us! Is it possible to require greater nearness? The Master's very heart is turned to me. Sometimes you stand face to face with another man and converse with him, but his heart is not turned towards you, and is occupied with something else; whilst here God's heart is wholly turned to you, with all its love, all its mercy; and according to your

[1] 1 Kings ix. 3.

faith He is ready to pour all His bounties upon you.

O holy temple, how good, how sweet it is to pray in thee! For where can there be ardent prayer if not within thy walls, before the throne of God, and before the face of Him Who sitteth upon it? Truly the soul melts from prayerful emotion, and tears flow down the cheeks like water. It is sweet to pray for all.

In the Church we are freed from worldly enchantment, and from the intoxication of worldly passions and desires; we become enlightened, sanctified, cleansed in our souls; we draw near to God, we are united with God. How worthily reverenced and loved should the temple of God be! How God's saints loved it!

Truly, the temple is heaven upon earth; for where the throne of God is, where the terrible mysteries are celebrated, where the angels serve together with men, where the Almighty is unceasingly glorified, there is truly heaven, and the heaven of heavens. And thus let us enter into the temple of God, and above all, into the Holy of Holies, with the fear of God, with a pure heart, laying aside all passions and every worldly care, and let us stand in it with faith and reverence, with understanding attention, with love and peace in our hearts, so that we

may come away renewed, as though made heavenly; so that we may live in the holiness natural to heaven, not binding ourselves by worldly desires and pleasures.

In the temple of God the simple, believing souls are as in the house of the Heavenly Father: they feel so free, so happy and light. Here true Christians have a foretaste of the future kingdom, prepared for them from the foundation of the world,[1] of future freedom from every sin and from death, of future peace and blessedness. When do they especially have a foretaste of this? When they turn sincerely with all their soul to God, praying fervently to God, taking the firm resolution to devote their lives to God, and when doing deeds of virtue outside the temple.

The spiritual tranquillity and blessedness which we sometimes experience in God's temple during the harmonious singing and the distinct reading of the reader, or of the officiating clergy, is a foretaste of that infinite bliss which those will experience who will eternally contemplate the unspeakable goodness of God's countenance. We must be zealous about harmonious singing and distinct reading. By calling upon the names of God's saints in prayer we move them to pray for us.

The source of every true joy, of all true

[1] S. Matt. xxv. 34.

tranquillity and peace of conscience, of cleansing, of spiritual and bodily healing, the source of spiritual power and boldness, flows in the temple, whilst theatres and various worldly distractions and consolations can never replace that which a true Christian receives in the temple, where God Himself comforts the souls of believers and those whose hearts are turned to Him, as a mother comforts her child. It is from the temple, too, that our departed ones receive consolation and solace, with the cleansing from their sins and forgiveness. How ardently we should love the temple, how we should adorn it! And so do all those who recognise its value; and the Church prays for them, saying: Let us pray for them that, with faith, piety, and fear of God, enter in; and further: Let us pray for them that bring forth fruit and do good deeds in this holy and all-venerable temple; or, Hallow those that love the beauty of Thine house. Glorify them in return by Thy Divine might.

During the celebration of Divine service and the sacraments the servant of God should be firmly convinced that whatever he thinks and says will be accomplished. It is so easy for the Lord to fulfil our requests, to create or to change anything in accordance with our words. Let this conviction be as easy and natural to you as your breathing the air, as seeing with your eyesight, as hearing with your ears. You have a thousand times experienced upon yourself

that this is really so; you have yourself experienced that there is no interval of time between the words: "He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast;" [1] that they are true in all their power. Absorb this conviction into yourself with your food and drink—with your breathing.

Lord! grant that Thy temple may communicate to all who enter into it with faith, piety, and fear of God, the enlightenment of their souls, the cleansing from their sins, sanctification, peace, health, tranquillity of soul—that it may strengthen their faith, hope and love; that it may further the amendment of their lives, success in all their good beginnings and works, mutual love, pure Christian life, the softening of their hearts, and the cessation of self-love, hard-heartedness, covetousness, greediness, envy, malice, gluttony, drunkenness, dissoluteness—of these vices, which are so prejudicial to social life, sapping its very foundations. Grant this, grant it, Lord, to all those who love to frequent Thy temple, and incline those also who do not love it to love it, and to amend their lives and works: for the time is near and the judgment is at the door for all, of every calling and position, of either sex and every age, and a work of infinite importance stands before all—to give an answer at the terrible Judgment of Christ.

[1] Psalm xxxiii. 9.

§ 2. Symbolism.

The example and shadow of heavenly things —Heb. viii. 5.

Imagery or symbols are a necessity of human nature in our present spiritually sensual condition; they explain by the vision many things belonging to the spiritual world which we could not know without images and symbols. It was for this reason that the Divine Teacher, the Personal Wisdom Who created all things, the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, often taught men by means of images or parables; it is for this reason also that in our Orthodox temples it is the custom to represent many things to the gaze of the Christian by imagery; for instance, to represent the Lord Himself, the most pure Mother of God, the angels and saints, on icons, in order that we may conform our lives, all our thoughts, words, and deeds, to the image of the thoughts, words, and deeds of the Lord and His saints; hence also the frequent making of the sign of the cross, the use of incense, the burning of candles and lamps, the processions in and out from the altar; hence the genuflections, the bowing of the head and the falling down upon the face (for we have fallen deeply through sin). All these remind us of various spiritual things and conditions. Imagery greatly influences the human soul, its creative or active capacity. Thus it is said that if during the time preceding

the birth of her child a mother often looks upon the face or portrait of her beloved husband, then the child is born very like his father, or if she often looks upon the portrait of a beautiful child she gives birth to a beautiful infant; thus, if a Christian often gazes with love and reverence upon the image of our Lord Jesus Christ, or of His most pure Mother and His saints, his soul will receive the spiritual features of the face lovingly looked upon (meekness, humility, mercy, and abstinence). Oh, if we oftener contemplated the images, and especially the life of the Lord and of His saints, how we should change, and rise from strength to strength! Thus, the fragrance of incense in church or in our houses reminds us by analogy of the fragrance of virtue, and by contrast of the evil odour of sins, and teaches those who are attentive to inward feelings to avoid the stench of the passions, of intemperance, fornication, malice, envy, pride, despair and other passions, and to adorn themselves with every Christian virtue; the incense reminds us of the Apostle's words: "For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: to the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life."[1] In a like manner the candles or lamps burning in church remind us of the spiritual light and fire; for instance, of the Lord's words: "I am come a Light into the

[1] 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16.

world, that whosoever believeth on Me should not abide in darkness;" [1] or "I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled?" [2] or "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately;" [3] or "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father Which is in heaven." [4] And the objects themselves by their very nature teach us concerning the spiritual objects and things corresponding to light and fire; for instance, that our hearts should always be burning with love for God and our neighbour, that we should not let the passions or the fire of Gehenna be kindled within us, and that by the example of a virtuous life we should light others, as a candle lights us in our worldly doings.

Owing to our corporality, the Lord, so to say, binds His presence and Himself to materiality, to some visible sign—for instance, in the sacrament of the Eucharist He Himself wholly takes up His abode in the Body and Blood; in that of penitence, He acts through the visible person of the priest; in that of baptism, through water; in that of chrism, through the anointing with chrism; in that of orders, through the bishop;

[1] S. John xii. 46.
[2] S. Luke xii. 49.
[3] S. Luke xii. 35. 36.
[4] S. Matt. v. 16.

in matrimony, through the priest and the crowns He Himself crowns the bride and bridegroom; in the sacrament of unction with oil, through the oil; He unites His presence to the temple, to the icons, to the cross, to the sign of the cross, to His name, consisting of separate sounds, to the holy water, to the consecrated bread, wheat, and wine; but the time will come when His Body and Blood, as well as all other visible signs, shall be no longer required for us, for we shall then "more truly communicate of Him on the nightless day of His Kingdom,"[1] whilst now only through material things—that is, through images and signs.

By reverencing icons—firstly, I reverence in them God, Who has begotten before all worlds the Son, His living Image, Who gave material being to the infinite thought of God the Father by creating the worlds and all creatures that were in the thought of God, and man, created after the image and likeness of God; secondly, I honour in them the image of God incarnate; thirdly, I honour in them myself, my own image of the immortal god-like man, called to be a partaker of the Divine nature, to union with the Lord, to be the temple of the Holy Ghost. Also, I am involuntarily incited to venerate icons because I see manifested in them the power of God, saving the faithful and punishing unbelievers, in the same way as I see and feel this

[1] From the Easter Canon.

same power in the sign of the Lord's cross, which is called life-giving by reason of its miraculous power. For all these reasons, icons replace for me the persons themselves whose names they bear. The images of the saints upon our icons represent to us the nearness in the spirit of God's saints, who all live in God and are always near to us in the Holy Ghost, through our hearty faith and prayer to them. For what can be far away from the Spirit of God, Who is everywhere present and filleth all things, "going through all understanding [gifted with understanding], pure, and most subtil, spirits?"[1] "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."[2] This means that the disposition of our souls lies open, not only to God, but also to the angels. "Standing before Thee and before Thy terrible and holy angels, I bring before Thee my evil and wicked doings, and confess them and reveal them."[3]

It is an excellent custom with Christians, and one pleasing to God, to have an icon of the Saviour and to pray to Him before it. This is a crying necessity of our soul. The Lord Himself, with the love which is proper to Him, desires to be formed in us, as the Apostle says: "My

[1] Wisdom vii. 23.

[2] S. Luke xv. 7, 10.

[3] Fourth Prayer of S. Simeon the Metaphrast before Holy Communion.

little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you"[1]; or "that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith."[2] But how can I form Christ in my heart if I do not first represent Him sensibly before my eyes? Thus we have images of the Saviour, of the Mother of God, and others. The love of Christians for them, desiring to always carry their images in their thoughts and hearts, as well as our nature, which is both carnal and spiritual, has called forth the necessity of representing them on painted icons, placing them in the most honoured places of the house, as in our hearts or the chambers of our soul, and of reverencing them by bowing to them, first spiritually, and then bodily. And how in accordance with God's intention our veneration of icons is! Heaven itself replies to us from the icons, as the Lord in olden times replied from the mercy-seat in the Hebrew tabernacle; many of them shine by miracles.

Is it only for the adornment of your dwelling, as a beautiful piece of furniture, as an ornament, that you hang up richly painted icons in your house, without turning to them with the hearty faith, love and reverence due to holy things? Ask your heart if it is so. Icons in houses or in the temple are not intended for show, but for prayer before them, for reverence, for instruction. The images of the saints ought to be our home

[1] Gal. iv. 19. [2] Eph. iii. 17.

and church teachers. Read their lives, and engrave them upon your heart, and endeavour to bring your life into conformity with theirs.

In making the sign of the cross, believe and constantly remember that your sins are nailed to the cross. When you fall into sin, immediately judge yourself sincerely, and make the sign of the cross over yourself, saying: Lord, Thou Who nailest our sins to the cross, nail also my present sin to Thy cross, and "have mercy upon me after Thy great goodness;" [1] and you will be cleansed from your sin. Amen.

It is impossible to represent and to think of the cross without love. Where the cross is, there is love; in the church you see crosses everywhere and upon everything, in order that everything should remind you that you are in the temple of the God of love, in the temple of love itself, crucified for us.

§ 3. The Divine Liturgy.

This do in remembrance of Me.—1 Cor. xi. 24.

The Divine Liturgy is truly a heavenly service upon earth, during which God Himself, in a particular, immediate, and most close manner, is present and dwells with men, being Himself the invisible Celebrant of the service, offering

[1] Psalm li. 1.

and being offered. There is nothing upon earth holier, higher, grander, more solemn, more life-giving than the Liturgy. The temple, at this particular time, becomes an earthly heaven; those who officiate represent Christ Himself, the Angels, the Cherubim, Seraphim and Apostles. The Liturgy is the continually repeated solemnisation of God's love to mankind, and of His all-powerful mediation for the salvation of the whole world, and of every member separately: the marriage of the Lamb—the marriage of the King's Son, in which the bride of the Son of God is—every faithful soul; and the giver of the bride—the Holy Ghost. With what prepared, pure, elevated souls it is therefore necessary to assist at the Liturgy, in order not to be amongst the number of those who, having no wedding garment, but a garment defiled by passions, were bound hand and foot, and cast out from the marriage feast into utter darkness. Whilst now, unfortunately, many do not even consider it necessary to assist at the Liturgy at all, others only go out of habit, and go away in the same state of mind as they came, without elevated thoughts, without a contrite heart, with an unrepentant soul, without the determination to amend. Some stand in church irreverently inattentively, without any concentration of mind, without any previous self-preparation at home by means of meditation and abstinence; and many manage to drink and eat more than they should before service. When the Lord de-

scended upon Mount Sinai the Hebrew people were ordered to previously prepare and cleanse themselves. In the Divine service we have not a lesser event than God's descent upon Mount Sinai, but a greater one: here before us is the very face of God the lawgiver. When the Lord appeared to Moses upon Mount Horeb in the bush, he was ordered to put off his shoes from his feet; but here is a greater manifestation of God than upon Horeb; there was only the prototype, here is the antitype Himself. Oh, how we cling to earthly things! We do not even wish to devote one hour exclusively to God! Even during the Divine, most heavenly Liturgy we allow ourselves to think and dream of earthly things, and fill our souls with images and desires for earthly things, sometimes—alas!—even with impure images; when we ought to be praying ardently, to be assiduously meditating upon this great mystery, to be repenting of our sins, longing and praying to be cleansed, sanctified, enlightened, renewed, and strengthened in the Christian life, and in the fulfilment of Christ's commandments; when we ought to be praying for the living and dead; for the Liturgy is a sacrifice of propitiation, thanksgiving, praise, and prayer. Great is the Liturgy! In it remembrance is made, not of the life of any great man, but that of God Incarnate, Who suffered and died for us, Who rose again, ascended into heaven, and Who shall come again to judge the whole world!

The Liturgy is the supper, the table of God's love to mankind. Around the Lamb of God upon the holy disc all are at this time assembled —the living and the dead, saints and sinners, the Church triumphant and the Church militant.

Remember that the celebration of the life-giving Mysteries is the unchangeable assent of the life-giving Trinity, predetermined from the creation of the world: it cannot but be. When you are celebrating the Mysteries, God the Father Himself, by His Holy Ghost, changes the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ—you are only an instrument. The Father Himself, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, celebrates through you the Liturgy, and consecrates the Holy Gifts. "Thou art He that offerest, and art offered," it is said, "Christ our God."[1] Remember, therefore, the immutability of God and the truth in all His words.

The Holy Mysteries are called the Divine gifts, because they are given to us by the Lord quite freely, for nothing, undeservedly on our part. Instead of punishing us for our daily numberless transgressions and giving us over to spiritual death, the Lord, in the Holy Mysteries, grants us forgiveness and cleansing from our sins, sanctification, peace of our spiritual powers,

[1] Prayer of the priest at the Liturgy during the Cherubic hymn.

healing and health of soul and body, and every blessing solely in accordance with our faith. If, then, the Lord daily gives us Himself, His Divine Mysteries, to partake of, ought we not therefore absolutely to give freely, for nothing, perishable goods such as money, food, drink, clothes, to those who ask us for them? And how can we be angered with those who eat our bread for nothing, when we ourselves partake freely of the priceless and immortal food of the Body and Blood of the Lord? "Of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again."[1]

Christ is the Bread of life, therefore let us lay aside our care about other bread. The God Who gives us the Body and Blood of His Son for our food and drink will likewise give us natural bread. He Who clothes our soul in Christ will likewise give us material clothing. He Who deigns to dwell in us will not deprive us of a perishable dwelling.

Why should it be wonderful if God Himself, the Creator of all things visible and invisible, transforms, transubstantiates bread and wine into His own most pure Body and His own most pure Blood? In these—in the bread and wine—the Son of God does not become again incarnate, for He was already once incarnate, and this is sufficient unto endless ages; but He is incarnate in the very same flesh in which He was

[1] S. Luke vi. 30.

before incarnate, in the same manner as He multiplied the five loaves and fed with these five loaves several thousands of people. There are a great many mysteries in nature which my mind cannot grasp, although they have concrete forms, yet they exist, with their mysteries. So also, in this Sacrament of the life-giving Body and Blood, it is a mystery for me how the bread and wine are made into the Body and Blood of the Lord Himself—but the mystery of the Body and Blood really exists, although it is incomprehensible to me. My Creator (I am only His clay, for God formed me of flesh and blood and endued me with a spirit), as the most wise, the infinitely Almighty God, has innumerable mysteries: I myself am a mystery, as the work of His hands. For my soul there is the Spirit of the Lord, and for my soul and body there are His Body and Blood.

Value by its properties that greatest miracle of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, as manifested in the communion, with faith in His Divine mysteries. What is the miracle? The peace-giving and life-giving effect upon your heart, slain by sin, which is so apparent after the uneasiness of heart and the spiritual deadness that often precedes communion. Never consider it from habit as anything ordinary or unimportant: by such thoughts and such a disposition of heart you will incur the wrath of God, and you will not enjoy peace nor feel renewed life after commun-

ion. By the most lively and heartfelt gratitude for the holy life-giving Sacrament you will obtain life from the Lord and your faith will increase more and more. Fear and uneasiness proceed from unbelief. Consider their arising during communion as a true sign that by unbelief you are removing yourself from the Life contained in the Cup and do not pay attention to them. O faith! faith! thou thyself art a miracle to us! It is thou that savest us! "Thy faith hath made thee whole."[1] And after lively faith in God's truth we always go from God in peace; whilst, on the contrary, after unbelief, always without peace. Ah! Satan often enters into us after we have unworthily communicated of the Divine Mysteries, and in every way tries to instil his lie into our hearts—that is, unbelief, for unbelief is the same thing as a lie. The destroyer of men now, as of old, tries in every way to destroy men by his lying, and by various thoughts and desires, and having stolen into the heart in the form of unbelief or any passion, he manifests himself in a manner worthy of him, mostly by impatience and malice, and you see that he is in you; but you will not often at once rid yourself of him, because he usually takes care to close every outlet in your heart by unbelief, obduracy, and others of his brood. "Thy labour is in vain, thou fallen angel, I am the servant of my Lord Jesus Christ. Thou that exaltest thyself in thine arrogance, lowerest thyself by thus violently

[1] S. Mark v. 34.

struggling with me, weak as I am." Say thus mentally to the evil spirit, as he lays his heavy load on your heart and compels you to evil of various kinds. These words will be like fiery scourges to the proud spirit, and he, shamed by your firmness and spiritual wisdom, will flee from you. You at once will perceive, feel, and wonder at the marvellous change in you; the heavy, soul-destroying load in your heart will no longer be there; you will feel so relieved, and will be convinced by your feelings that there are spirits of evil hovering around us and constantly seeking our destruction, poisoning our hearts with the poison of dark and evil thoughts, and endeavouring to destroy our love to mankind and fellowship with them.)

(In communicating with undoubting faith of the Life-giving Sacrament, I am instructed in a sensible manner of the Omnipresence of Christ. In what manner? Because in every particle of the Body and in each drop of the Blood I receive Christ wholly, and thus, through my spiritual vision, I see that He is at the same time wholly in all the particles and drops, whatever their number may be unto infinity. Exactly in the same manner the Lord is wholly in every temple; and as orthodox temples are to be found upon the whole earth, so the Lord is present upon the whole earth, not only through His Godhead, but both in His Body and Soul; everywhere, wholly and indivisibly,

communicating Himself to believers, and bringing forth sweet fruits in them: the purifying of sins, the sanctification of Christian souls and bodies, righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, uniting all to Himself, to the Father and the Holy Ghost. We also know that through fervent prayer He enters into the souls of believers with the Father and the Holy Ghost. Being inherent in the whole material world, and vivifying the whole of it together, and each part of it separately, the Lord is still more inherent in men, and especially in Christians, and lives in them: "Know ye not your own selves how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?"[1] "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?"[2]

God the Father—acting in our mind and heart through His Personal Word (expressed in our word by the Holy Ghost, resting in the Personal Word), and through our word of faith, trust, meekness, and love proceeding from our lips—accomplishes in an instant, once for all, the wonderful acts predetermined since the creation of the world, of our regeneration, sanctification, strengthening, spiritual nourishment, and healing in Christ; although the preparatory rites for these actions are very prolonged, for God is an incomplex, Almighty Being. For instance, the change of the bread and wine into the Body and

[1] 2 Cor. xiii. 5. [2] 1 Cor. vi. 19.

Blood of Christ is accomplished immediately after the utterance of the words: "Make this bread the precious Body of Thy Christ, and that which is in this cup the precious Blood of Thy Christ, changing them by Thy Holy Ghost." After these last words, and after the blessing, with the sign of the cross with the hand, the bread and wine are instantaneously changed into the Body and Blood of Christ, but not before; for the Divine Omnipotence awaits the word of the priest co-operating with It. "For we are labourers together with God."[1] The blessing at this time, by the sign of the cross in the name of the Lord, signifies that the mystery is accomplished by the Holy Ghost in the name of Jesus Christ, and for the sake of Jesus Christ, at His intercession, by the favour of God the Father.

When you receive the holy life-giving Mysteries, steadfastly represent to yourself Christ Himself under the form of the bread and wine; make upon them the mental inscription "Jesus Christ," and with this mental inscription (whilst the sentient one already exists) send in thought into the depths of your heart, and there lay and mentally preserve the life-giving Guest. If thus, with such faith, you receive the Holy Mysteries, you will see that they will bring forth in you the deepest peace of your spiritual powers, and you will feel most wonderfully happy and light. The Lord loads us with benefits according to the

[1] 1 Cor. iii. 9.

measure of our faith; the Body and Blood show themselves to be life-giving, burning embers in the believer's heart, according to the measure of his heart's preparedness. The Church is heaven; the altar, the throne of life, from which God descends in the holy and most pure Mysteries to feed and give life to believers. "Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty!"[1] Thou preparest us beforehand for the contemplation of the throne, and of Him Who sitteth upon it, by seeing the earthly throne in the Church, and by the contemplation, with the eyes of faith, of Him Who sitteth upon it.

Reverence with all the powers of your soul all the sacraments, and say to yourself in respect to every sacrament before the celebration or the communion of it: "This is God's mystery. I myself am only the unworthy witness or partaker of it." Otherwise, our proud intellect even wishes to search out God's mystery, and if unable to penetrate it, rejects it as not coming under the small measure of our intellect.

"I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."[2] So it is, Master: Thou art with us throughout all days; we are not a single day without Thee, and we cannot live without Thy presence near us! Thou art with us especially in the Sacrament of Thy Body and Blood. Oh, how truly and essentially art Thou present in

[1] Rev. xv. 3. [2] S. Matt. xxviii. 20.

the Holy Mysteries! Thou our Lord in every liturgy takest upon Thyself a vile body similar to ours in every respect save that of sin, and feedest us with Thy life-giving flesh. Through the sacrament Thou art wholly with us, and Thy Flesh is united to our flesh, whilst Thy Spirit is united to our soul; and we feel this life-giving, most peaceful, most sweet union, we feel that by joining ourselves to Thee in the Holy Eucharist we become one Spirit with Thee as it is said: "He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit."[1] We become like Thee, good, meek and lowly, as Thou hast said of Thyself: "I am meek and lowly in heart."

§ 4. Preparation for Holy Communion.

But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup.—1 Cor. xi. 28.

My brothers and sisters who are preparing for Holy Communion,[2] let us fear hardened insensibility to our sins; let us fear the pride of our hearts, which says: "I do not need any forgiveness of sins; I am not guilty, I am not sinful"; or else, "My sins are trifling, they

[1] 1 Cor. vi. 17.

[2] It is the custom of the Orthodox Church for her members to set aside a week, generally during one of the Lents, for preparation to receive the Holy Communion, during which time they fast, attend the daily services of the Church, and abstain from worldly matters as far as possible.

are only human ones"—as though it were necessary that they should be diabolical; or, "I do not feel amiss living in my sins." This is the pride of Satan, and it is Satan himself speaking these words in our hearts. Let us feel deeply, deeply, with our whole hearts, our innumerable iniquities; let us sigh for them from the very depths of our souls; let us shed tears of contrition for them, in order to propitiate to mercy the Master, Whom we have angered. Let us not in the least justify ourselves like the Pharisees, the hypocrites: "For in Thy sight," it is said, "shall no man living be justified;"[1] and we can only propitiate God to be merciful unto us by sincere repentance for our sins. Let us put aside indifference and coldness; let us labour unto the Lord with a fervent spirit. Do not let us forget that we have now come to propitiate the Master of our lives and our righteous Judge for a long period of our sinful lives. Is this, therefore, a time for any coldness and indifference, which are not approved of even in social intercourse, in our relations with our fellow-men? Ought not our soul, on the contrary, to be turned into a spiritual fire, and pour itself forth in tears of most heartfelt repentance? O my God, my God! our iniquities have literally increased beyond the number of the hairs of our heads, above the number of the sand of the sea, and yet we do not feel them, we are indifferent to them; we even do not cease to love them.

[1] Psalm cxliii. 2.

"If Thou, Lord, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss, O Lord, who may abide it?"[1] Grant, Lord, unto us all a contrite spirit and a humble heart, so that we may offer to Thee true penitence. Amen.

What is your obligation as a communicant of the Holy Mysteries? You must "seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God;"[2] and not think of earthly things, for "Christ came upon earth in order to raise us up to heaven."[3] "In My Father's house are many mansions. . . I go to prepare a place for you."[4] "Our conversation is in heaven."[5] "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."[6] "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."[7] "Suffer little children to come unto Me . . . for of such is the kingdom of God."[8] Do you see what the final purpose is for which Christ came upon earth, for which He gives us His Divine Mysteries—His Body and Blood? This purpose is—to give us the kingdom of heaven. Let us aspire to gain it.

"He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My

[1] Psalm cxxx. 3.
[2] Col. iii. 1, 2.
[3] From the Acathistos to the Sweetest Lord Jesus.
[4] S. John xiv. 2.
[5] Phil. iii. 20.
[6] S. Matt. v. 3.
[7] S. Matt. v. 20.
[8] S. Luke xviii. 16.

blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him."[1] This we feel, and experience confirms it. Most blessed, most full of life is the man who communicates of the Holy Mysteries with faith and heartfelt repentance for his sins. This we truly feel, and the contrast is also manifest. If we approach the Holy Cup without sincere repentance for sin, and with doubt, then Satan enters into us, and dwells in us, destroying our soul, and this, too, is most perceptible.

In receiving the Holy Sacrament be as undoubtedly sure that you communicate of the Body and Blood of Christ, as you are sure that every moment you breathe air. Say to yourself, "As surely as I constantly breathe the air, so surely do I now receive into myself, together with the air, my Lord Jesus Christ Himself, my breathing, my life, my joy, my salvation. He is my breath, before air, at every moment of my life; He is my word, before any other word; He is my thought, before any other thought; He is my light, before any other light; He is my meat and drink, before any other meat and drink; He is my raiment, before any other raiment; He is my fragrance, before any other fragrance; He is my sweetness, before any other sweetness; He is my father and mother, before any other father and mother; before the earth, He is the firmest ground, that nothing can ever shake and that bears me. As we, earthly

[1] S. John vi. 56.

creatures, forget that at all times we breathe, live, move, and exist in Him, and have hewed out "cisterns, broken cisterns,"[1] for ourselves, He has opened unto us, in His Holy Mysteries, in His Blood, the source of living water, flowing into life eternal, and gives Himself to us as food and drink, in order "that we might live through Him."[2]

Those who attend the Divine service of the Orthodox Church, and study the science of Divine service, must bear in mind that the service here on earth is a preparation for all-rejoicing service to God in heaven; that in serving God with the body, it is still more necessary to serve God with the soul and with a pure heart; that in hearing the Divine service, they must learn to serve God as those Saints served Him, whose lives and works of faith, hope, and love we hear of during the Divine service; that God should be above all served by deed and truth, and not only by words and the tongue. We are called to serve God by our very being: we are given an upright stature in order that we may continually look upon God, thank and glorify Him; our understanding, heart, will, and all feelings are given to us for the same purpose.

How long will it be before the Holy Mysteries of which we partake remind us that "we, being

[1] Jer. ii. 13. [2] 1 S. John iv. 9.

many, . . . are one body";[1] and how long will there be no mutual hearty union between us, as members of the single body of Christ? How long shall we make our own laws of life be inimical to each other, envy each other, torment, grieve, fret, judge and abuse each other? When will the Spirit of Christ abide in us, the spirit of meekness, humility, kindness, love unfeigned, self-denial, patience, chastity, abstinence, simplicity and sincerity, contempt for earthly things and entire aspiration after heavenly ones? Lord Jesus Christ! enlighten our spiritual vision and "let Thy loving Spirit lead" us all "into the land of righteousness."[2] Give us Thy Spirit!

He who believes in the Saviour, and feeds upon His Body and Blood, has life eternal in himself; and this is the reason why every sin occasions painful suffering and disturbance of heart. But those who have not life eternal in them drink iniquity like water, and do not suffer because life eternal is not in their hearts.

Some believe that their whole welfare and their attitude before God consists in the reading of all the appointed prayers, without paying attention to the preparedness of their hearts for prayer to God, nor to their inward amendment. Many, for instance, thus read the prayers appointed before Holy Communion; whilst at this time we should, above all, look to

[1] 1 Cor. x. 17. [2] Psalm cxliii. 10.

the amendment and preparedness of the heart to receive the Holy Sacrament. If your heart is right in your bosom; if, by God's mercy, it is ready to meet the Bridegroom, then, thank God, it is well with you, even although you have not succeeded in reading all the appointed prayers. "For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power."[1] Obedience to our mother, the Church, in everything is right; and if it is possible for one "to receive" prolonged prayer, let him pray long. But "all men cannot receive this saying."[2] If long prayer is not compatible with fervour of spirit, then it is better to say a short but fervent prayer. Remember that the one word of the publican, said from a fervent heart, justified him. God does not look at the multitude of words, but upon the disposition of the heart. The chief thing is lively faith and fervent repentance for sins.

He who comes to the Holy Cup with any passion in his heart, the same is a Judas, and comes to kiss the Son of man flatteringly.

In order to communicate of the life-giving Sacrament with undoubting faith and to vanquish all the wiles, all the calumnies of the enemy, represent to yourself that that which is received by you from the Cup is "He Which is"—that is, alone existing. If the disposition of your thoughts and of heart is such, then by receiving

[1] 1. Cor. iv. 20. [2] S. Matt. xix. 11.

the Holy Mysteries you will obtain peace, joy, and new life, and will recognise in your heart that the Lord truly and essentially dwells within you, and you in the Lord. This is from experience.

§ 5. The Fruit of a good Communion.

He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.—S. John vi. 56.

"Ye shall know them by their fruits."[1] By the most sweet, most blessed, and life-giving fruits of the Liturgy—the most pure Mysteries of the Body and Blood of the Lord—you will recognise that it is from God, the inspiration of the Divine Spirit, and that this most holy, life-giving Spirit breathes in all its prayers and sacred rites. What a wonderful living tree is this Divine Luturgy! What leaves it has! What fruit it bears! Not only the fruits, but even "the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations."[2] For who has not received great spiritual benefit, peace, and blessedness into his soul from only devoutly assisting at the Divine Liturgy! And that which brings forth good fruits must be in itself good; such is the law of creation.

To the glory of the most holy name of our Master the Lord Jesus Christ and that of our

[1] S. Matt. vii. 16. [2] Rev. xxii. 2.

Lady, the Mother of God, I have experienced a thousand times in my heart, that, after the Communion of the Holy Sacrament or after fervent prayer at home—ordinary prayer or prayer in consequence of some sin, passion, and sorrow and straitness—the Lord, at the prayers of our Lady, or our Lady Herself, by the Lord's grace bestowed upon me, as though it were a new spiritual nature, pure, good, great, bright, wise, beneficent, instead of impure, despondent, languid, faint-hearted, dark, dull, and evil. Many times was I thus changed, with a marvellous great change, to mine own wonder and often to that of others. Glory to Thy power, Lord! Glory to Thy mercy, Lord! Glory to Thy bounties, Lord, which Thou hast manifested upon me a sinner!

I marvel at the greatness and life-giving properties of the Holy Sacrament. An old woman who was spitting blood, and who had lost all strength, being unable to eat anything, after the Communion of the Holy Sacrament, which I administered to her, began to recover on the same day from her illness. A young girl who was almost dying, after the Communion of the Holy Sacrament began to recover on the same day from her illness; began to eat, drink, and speak; whilst before this she was almost in a state of unconsciousness, violently tossed about, and could neither eat nor drink anything. Glory to Thy life-giving and terrible Mysteries, O Lord!

Communicants of the Divine Mysteries! know how most truly you become united to the Lord if you communicate worthily. What boldness you have towards the Lord and towards the Mother of God! What purity you ought to have! what meekness, humility, gentleness; what detachment from everything earthly; what a burning desire for heavenly, most pure, eternal joys!

Men throughout all their earthly life see everything but Christ, the life-giver; this is why they have no spiritual life, this is why they are given to every passion: unbelief, want of faith, covetousness, envy, hatred, ambition, the pleasures of eating and drinking. It is only at the close of their life that they seek Christ through the Holy Communion, and even this out of crying necessity and as a custom usual amongst others. O Christ, our God, our Life and Resurrection! How low have we fallen in our vanity, how blind have we become! But how would it have been with us had we always sought Thee, had we always had Thee in our hearts? The tongue cannot express the bliss which those experience who have Thee in their hearts! Unto them Thou art strengthening food, inexhaustible drink, shining raiment, the sun, "the peace of God which passeth all understanding,"[1] unutterable joy, and everything. Possessing Thee, all earthly things become dust and corruption.

[1] Phil. iv. 7.

It is good for me to pray for men when I partake worthily, that is consciously, of the Holy Communion: then the Father and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, my God, is within me, and I feel great boldness before Him. Then the King is within me, as in His abode: I may ask what I will. "We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him."[1] "Ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."[2]

By opening unto others the gates into the Kingdom of Heaven through baptism, shall we not enter in ourselves? By cleansing others through penitence and absolving them from their sins, shall we not obtain remission of our sins? By uniting others with Christ in the Sacrament of the Holy Communion, shall we not ourselves be most truly united with Him "on the nightless day of Christ's kingdom"? By bestowing upon others in the Sacrament of Chrism the strengthening and generative grace of the Holy Ghost, shall we not obtain strength and power ourselves from the most Holy Spirit, and shall we not ourselves grow in spiritual gifts? Truly we firmly hope to receive the promised blessings by the grace, bountifulness, and love to men of God our Saviour. God grant that we may all receive them! Only do not let us become slothful, despondent; do not let us "make provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof";[3] but let us

[1] S. John xiv. 23. [2] S. John xv. 7.
[3] Rom. xiii. 14.

hold "the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience,"[1] and let us progress in love for God and our neighbour.

I thank Thee, Lord, for bestowing new life upon me each time, when, with tears of repentance and gratitude, I celebrate the Divine Liturgy and partake of Thy most pure and life-giving Mysteries. To Thy Holy Mysteries I owe the prolongation of my existence until now, the purity of my ways, and my good report amongst Thy people. May Thy great Name be glorified more and more in me and in all Thy people. May they be called by Thy great Name, throughout the whole world; Thy kingdom come, the kingdom of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, in all our hearts, as Thou hast said: "I will dwell in them and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people,"[2] and may Thy will, Thy holy, most wise, all-good, most perfect, and most blessed will be done in earth, in all Thy people, and in me, a sinner, as it is in heaven, for our own will is erring, short-sighted, sinful, destructive, unloving, evil, envious, proud, slothful, luxury-loving, money-loving, and avaricious.

As in Jesus Christ "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily,"[3] so likewise in the

[1] 1 Tim. iii. 9.
[2] 2 Cor. vi. 16, 18; Lev. xxvi. 12; Jer. iii. 19.
[3] Col. ii. 9.

life-giving Sacrament of His Body and Blood. In the small human body dwelleth all the fulness of the infinite, incomprehensible Godhead, and in the small lamb, or bread, in each smallest particle, dwelleth all Divine fulness. Glory to Thy Omnipotence and Goodness, O Lord!

How many times already, O Master, Lord Jesus, hast Thou renewed my nature, heedlessly corrupted by my sins! There is no measure and number to this. How many times hast Thou saved me from the furnace burning within me, from the furnace of many and diverse passions, from the abyss of despondency and despair! How many times hast Thou renewed my depraved heart, when only I have called upon Thy Name with faith! How many times hast Thou accomplished this through the life-giving Holy Sacrament! O Lord! in truth there is no number and measure of Thy mercies unto me, a sinner. What shall I offer to Thee, or what can I render unto Thee for Thine innumerable benefits to me, Jesus, my life and my lightness? May I be prudent in my ways, according to Thy grace; for "blessed are those that are undefiled in the way,"[1] as Thou hast said, through the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of our forefather, David. I will endeavour to be faithful unto Thee, to be humble, meek, not irritable, gentle, forbearing, industrious, merciful, generous, not covetous, obedient.

[1] Psalm cxix. 1.

§ 6. The Duty of Public Worship.

Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together.—Heb. x. 25.

Both learned and unlearned young men seldom go to church, and in general do not attend to their spiritual education, looking upon it as unnecessary and giving themselves up to worldly vanity. Attention must be paid to this. It is the fruit of pride, of want of spiritual development. They consider attendance at church and Divine service as the business of the common people and women, forgetting that, in the temple, angels officiate with trembling, together with men, and regard this as their highest bliss.

Does not coldness towards public worship, towards Divine service, proceed from the fact that some do not understand it, and that others, although they have studied the science of Divine service, have been taught it drily, without any examples, only according to the understanding? whilst Divine service, being the high contemplation of the mind, is at the same time, and preeminently, the peace, sweetness and blessedness of the heart.

When Christians come to church to pray to God, then it would seem that they have not one God, but many gods and many idols (and thus they sin against the first and second commandments). Some have themselves for idols of

self-love: "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."[1]

How inexpressibly sad it is to see that on the Lord's festivals the enemy collects his tax—and an exceedingly great one it is—from Christians! And the greater the festival the heavier the tax that Christians pay the enemy; for what do we see on the festivals? Perfect idleness, unbridled passions, brawls, profligacy, thefts, amusements. My God! What gratification of the flesh! What zealous service to the Devil! Are these people really Christians, redeemed by the precious Blood of the Son of God? Are we living in Christian times and not in Pagan ones? Are these men communicants of the life-giving Sacrament? Are these the same people who frequent God's temple and pray to the Lord together with us? If they are, then for what purpose do they go to church? Evidently only from habit, and not from any attachment of a thankful heart to Christ the Saviour. Evidently they have not prayed to God; they have not drawn near to Him with their heart, but only with their lips—if they have done so at all—and thus have not entered into the spirit of the festival; in general, they do not understand the nature and the object of Christian festivals, and do not participate in them as children participate in the family festivals of their parents. How wicked are the children of that loving, good, and

[1] S. Matt. vi. 21; S. Luke xii. 34.

holy Mother, the Church! The Mother is holy—the children are sinful; the Mother is spiritual—the children are carnal; the Mother is heavenly—the children are earthly; the Mother desires to give her children eternal, spiritual blessings, instead of corruptible and transitory ones; and the children reject them and choose for themselves earthly, sinful, passing pleasures. However, besides drunkards and men given over to various vices on festivals, we meet oftener still people who have not been to church (and do not even know that it is a festival, because they have never thought about it). For such people there is only one festival—the festival of the flesh. Ah! how long will it be before we priests rise up against all the disorders that take place on the Lord's festivals? Which of God's priests will have the zeal of Elias, Phinehas, Isaiah, or Jeremiah, in order to rise up in the power of the Holy Ghost against all these disorders on the Lord's festivals in the new Israel, in order to use all their powers, all their life for the glory of God—to uproot such laxity of morals amongst Christians? Lord! when shall we duly keep holy Thy festivals? When shall we comfort our holy Mother the Church by obedience to her ordinances? When shall we be imbued with her spirit? How long shall we begin the celebration of the great saving events of the Orthodox faith with the spirit and end them with the flesh? How long shall the enemy mock at the members of Christ, which Christians

are? How long shall men of other faiths and religions point at us and say: "Look, these are the Christians who call themselves Orthodox. Look how they live! What sort of faith can they have in their hearts? What knowledge of their religion can they have? What kind of priests must they have? How badly they must teach the people religion! How little can they explain to them the meaning of the festivals, their object, and the purpose for which they were instituted! How little can they teach them to live according to the faith! My God! What a reproach to our Orthodox faith and to us pastors! And yet, perhaps, is not what they say of us pastors just? It is a great deal our fault that Christians do not spend the festivals as they ought. We do not unmask them; do not forbid them; we do not implore them with all forbearance and instruction to spend the festivals, and in general to live in a more Christian-like manner. We do not speak strongly enough against idleness, drunkenness, profligacy; we do not thunder in God's Church, in God's words, against these vices, which have taken such a terrible hold of Christians. We do not always exclude from the Holy Cup, as an example to others, those persons who are known for their drunkenness and adultery, and we thus allow these contagious and abominable vices to spread further and further; or at confession we impose too light penances upon those who deserve the severe punishment of the Church, and we do not

watch as we should the fulfilment of even those penances which we lay upon them. Then, Righteous God! neither the pastors nor the flock can justify themselves before Thee. "They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one."[1] What will it come to at last with the existing disorder of our life? Iniquity spreads over the earth; the kingdom of the enemy grows wider. Thy Kingdom diminishes; there are but few of Thy chosen in whose hearts Thou resteth. Many are the slaves of the Devil, in whose hearts the destroyer from time immemorial dwells like a thief. What wilt Thou do unto us, Lord? The blood of Thy testament cries out from the earth, but the voice of Thy Gospel does not penetrate into the hearts of Christians. Thy commandments are neglected, the Church's ordinances are trampled under foot. What wilt Thou do unto us, O Lord? Lord! send zealous workers into Thy vineyard, who "seek not their own,"[2] but who seek Thee, Christ. Give them the zeal of the prophets, the power and wisdom of the Apostles, so that they may day and night unwearyingly labour in the fields of the hearts of men.

[1] Rom. iii. 12. [2] 1 Cor. xiii. 5.

§ 7. The Word of God.

I am as glad of Thy word as one that findeth great spoils.—Psalm cxix. 162.

Be firmly convinced that every word, especially those pronounced during prayer, is realisable, remembering that the author of the Word is God the Word, that our God Himself, worshipped in the Holy Trinity, is expressed by the three words or names: The Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; that each word has a corresponding being, or that every word can become being and deed. Therefore reverence the word and value it. Remember that the Son of God, as the Personal Word of God, is always united with the Father and the Holy Ghost, in the same manner as the Father, as the Supreme Wisdom, participates, by His omnipresence, His creative Word, and the Holy Ghost the Accomplisher, in the words of Holy Scripture, or in the prayers or in the writings of the most wise Fathers. This is why no word is vain, but has or should have power in itself. Woe to those who speak idly, for they will have to answer for their idle speaking! "For with God nothing shall be impossible."[1] Power and accomplishment are, in general, the properties of the word. Such should it also be in the mouths of men.

Have you learned to see God and represent Him to yourself—as the omnipresent Wisdom,

[1] S. Luke i. 37.

as the living, acting Word, as the vivifying Holy Spirit? The Holy Scripture is the domain of Wisdom, Word and Spirit, of God in the Trinity; in it He clearly manifests Himself: "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life,"[1] said the Lord. The writings of the Holy Fathers are again the expression of the Mind, Word and Spirit of the Holy Trinity, in which the spirit of the higher class (spiritually speaking) of mankind has largely participated; the writings of ordinary worldly men are the expression of the fallen spirit of men, with all their sinful attachments, habits and passions. In the Holy Scripture we see God face to face, and ourselves as we are. Man, know thyself through them, and walk always as in the presence of God.

When you doubt the truth of any person or any event described in Holy Scripture, then remember that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God,"[2] as the Apostle says, and is therefore true, and does not contain any imaginary persons, fables and tales, although it includes parables which every one can see are not true narratives, but are written in figurative language. The whole of the Word of God is single, entire, indivisible truth; and if you admit that any narrative, sentence, or word is untrue, then you sin against the truth of the whole of Holy Scripture and its primordial Truth, which

[1] S. John vi. 63. [2] 2 Tim. iii. 16.

is God Himself. "I am the Truth,"[1] said the Lord; "Thy word is truth,"[2] said Jesus Christ to God the Father. Thus, consider the whole of the Holy Scripture as truth; everything that is said in it has either taken place or takes place.

As you are aware, man, in his words, does not die; he is immortal in them, and they will speak after his death. I shall die, but shall speak even after my death. How many immortal words are in use amongst the living, which were left by those who have died long ago, and which sometimes still live in the mouths of a whole people! How powerful is the word even of an ordinary man! Still more so is the Word of God: it will live throughout all ages, and will always be living and acting.

The whole Gospel is the gospel of the kingdom to which Christians are predestined, and forms as though one single promise (all the parables, all the prophecies and miracles); the epistles of the Apostles reveal in greater detail the promises of Christian hope.

Every word of Holy Writ, every word of the Divine liturgy, of the morning and evening services, every word of the Sacramental prayers and of the other prayers, has in itself the power corresponding to it and contained in it, like the

[1] S. John xiv. 6. [2] S. John xvii. 17.

sign of the honourable and life-giving cross. Such grace is present in every word of the Church, on account of the Personal Incarnate Word of God, Who is the Head of the Church, dwelling in the Church. Besides this, every truly good word has in itself the power corresponding to it, owing to the all-filling simple Word of God. With what attention and reverence, with what faith, must we therefore pronounce each word! For the Word is the Creator Himself, God, and through the Word all things were brought into existence from non-existence.

§ 8. Rites and Customs of the Church.

I will keep Thy ceremonies: O forsake me not utterly.—Psalm cxix. 8.

In the temple, in its arrangements and parts, in the icons, in the Divine service, with the reading of the Holy Scriptures, the singing, the rites, the entire Old Testament, New Testament, and Church history, the whole Divine ordering of the salvation of mankind is emblematically traced, as upon a chart, in figures and in general outlines. Grand is the spectacle of the Divine service of our Orthodox Church for those who understand it, who penetrate into its essence, its spirit, its signification, its sense!

I thank my all holy, all merciful, and most

wise Mother, the Church of God, for salutarily guiding me during this temporal life, and for educating me for the heavenly citizenship; I thank her for all the offices of prayers, for the Divine services, for the sacraments and rites; I thank her for the fasts so beneficial to me both in spiritual and bodily respects (for through them I am healthy both in spirit and body, calm, vigilant, and light; without the fasts I should feel extreme heaviness, which I indeed experienced when not fasting); I thank my spotless Mother the Church of God for enrapturing me with her heavenly services, transporting my spirit to heaven, enlightening my intellect with heavenly truth, showing me the way to eternal life; for delivering me from the violence and ignominy of the passions, and making my life blessed.

Our faith and Church is like a most honoured, holy, godly, firm, venerable woman, who never grows old, and in whom ever dwells a young, living spirit, giving life to her true children. As we always behave with great respect to old people, honouring their grey hair and wisdom —the fruits of experience—and highly value each of their words, and apply them to our own life, so ought we especially to honour the Church, venerate her holiness, antiquity, her unshaken firmness, her divinely enlightened wisdom and spiritual experience, her soul-saving commandments and ordinances, her Divine

services, sacraments and rites. How can we do otherwise than respect her, even if only for having saved in her bosom an innumerable multitude of people, transplanting them into the abode of eternal peace and joy, not forgetting them even after their death, but remembering them until now upon earth, eternally praising and glorifying their virtues as her true children? Where will you find a more grateful friend, a more tender mother? And therefore, may Christians attach themselves wholly and with all their hearts to the Church of Christ, that they may be firmly established unto the end of their temporal life! May they all be zealous of the fulfilment of all her commandments and ordinances, and may they obtain in her eternal salvation through Christ Jesus our Lord!

When praying, pay steadfast attention to the words of the prayer, feeling them in your heart. Do not withdraw your mind from them to any other thoughts. When praying during Divine service, during the celebration of the sacraments and the singing of the prayers and hymns upon various occasions, lay surely to your heart the words themselves of the Church prayers, believing that not a single word is placed there in vain, that every one of them has its power, that in each word dwells the Holy Trinity the Lord Himself, "Who is everywhere present and fills all things": think thus: I myself am nothing, the Lord does everything. Also think: when

I speak, God the Word speaks in me. I need be careful for nothing. "Casting all your care," it is said, "upon Him, for He careth for you."[1]

During Divine service, during the celebration of all the sacraments and prayers, be trustful, as a child in relation to his parents. Remember what great Fathers of the Church, what inspired luminaries, enlightened by the Holy Ghost, are guiding you! Be simple, trustful, undoubting as a child in godly matters. Cast all your care upon the Lord, and be entirely free from sorrow. "Take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father, which speaketh in you."[2] The Lord has long ago freed us from this care, this sorrow, having taught our God-fearing Fathers by His Spirit what to say and how to pray to the Lord at Divine service, at the celebration of the sacraments and upon various other occasions and circumstances of human life, requiring prayer to bring down a blessing from above. It ought to be easy for us to pray. Only the enemy troubles us. But what matters his troubling if our heart is firmly established in the Lord! It is only a misfortune if we do not rest in God; if there is no firm faith in us, if we have bound ourselves by worldly attachments, if our intellect is proud and presumptuous, then, even in the most holy, most

[1] 1 S. Peter v. 7. [2] S. Matt. x. 19, 20.

pure matter of service, at the celebration and communion of the Holy Mysteries, the enemy will greatly hinder us.

If, during service, your brother does anything irregularly, or somewhat negligently, do not become irritated, either inwardly or outwardly with him, but be generously indulgent to his fault, remembering that during your life you yourself commit many, many faults, that you yourself are a man with all infirmities, that God is long-suffering and most merciful, and that He forgives you and all of us our iniquities an innumerable multitude of times. Remember the words of the Lord's Prayer: "And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us." These words should always remind us that we ourselves at all times are great trespassers, great sinners before God, and that, remembering this, we should be humble in the depths of our hearts, and not be very severe to the faults of our brethren, weak like ourselves; that as we do not judge ourselves severely, we must not judge others severely, for our brethren are—our members, like ourselves. Irritability of temper proceeds from want of self-knowledge, from pride, and also from the fact that we do not consider the great corruption of our nature, and know but little the meek and humble Jesus.

If the Church has composed and transmitted for general use prayers and psalms to God the

Trinity and to His saints, then this signifies that God hears our prayers and is always near those who pray. But people mostly pray as if there were no God with them, or as if He did not heed their prayers. Let us ascribe to the Lord at least the same amount of attention that good parents show to the requests of their children, at least that provident and attentive love which good parents have for their children. So the Lord Himself teaches: "If ye then," says He, "being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?"[1] Thus our requests or prayers will also be fulfilled if we pray with our whole heart. This is true. This is from daily experience.

Through our attachment to perishable things, by thoughts and cares about them, we lose sight of objects of the greatest importance, of the objects really natural to our souls, constituting their true and eternal element; we hew out for ourselves "cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water," and forsake "the Fountain of living waters";[2] we do not turn spiritual, holy, heavenly and life-giving thoughts into our life, into our blood, but continue to live by worldly, earthly, passionate thoughts and aspirations, which only oppress, torment, and slay us. Oh, if we could ever reason, as the Gospel teaches

[1] S. Matt. vii. 11. [2] Jer. ii. 13.

us, as the holy Church teaches us in her Divine services, and prayers, at the celebration of the sacraments and other offices, as the Holy Fathers did in their writings! Then even upon earth we should all become citizens of heaven, speaking heavenly things.

Through the prayer of faith we can obtain from the all-merciful and all-bestowing God all spiritual and indispensable earthly blessings besides, if only the prayer is fervent and the desire to obtain these blessings sincere. And what prayers the Church puts into our mouths! Such, that by means of them we can easily incline the Lord to be merciful to us and to bestow upon us every good gift. The enemy, knowing God's goodness and the power of prayer, endeavours by every means to deter us from it, or during the prayer tries to distract our minds, to hinder us by various passions and attachments to earthly things, or by hurry, disturbance, etc.

Everything that the Church puts into our mouths and hearing is truth, the breathing or teaching of the Holy Ghost. Reverence every thought, every word of the Church. Remember that the domain of thought and word belongs to God as well as the whole visible and invisible world. You have nothing of your own, not even any thought or word. Everything is our Father's, everything is God's. Mingle with the common

order of things, as gold melts into various forms, or as nature forms one harmonious whole. Do not lead a self-loving, separate life.

Those who go to attend the Divine Service after having eaten much, voluntarily lay upon themselves an unnecessary and injurious burden, and deaden their hearts beforehand to prayer, obstructing the access of holy thoughts and feelings to it. We must be most careful not to eat before Divine service. We must remember that "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink,"[1] that is, that God cannot reign in the heart that is overburdened with surfeiting and drunkenness.

If people labour so long for worldly vanity, and often make us wait in vain for them to finish, then should not we, God's servants, labour for the Lord God slowly, pausing with understanding, with feeling, with great reverence and zeal, reading the prayers distinctly, separately? Better let people wait for us than we for them. Lord, let it be thus at every celebration of Divine service of the sacraments. Give all this Thyself: "for without Thee we can do nothing."[2]

"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."[3] Know what those who pray

[1] Rom. xiv. 17. [2] S. John xv. 5.
[3] S. Matt. vi. 21.

in the temple are thinking of. They think of that to which their hearts are attached.

"I am the vine," says the Lord, "ye are the branches,"[1] that is the one Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. Therefore, as the Lord is holy, so also the Church is holy; as the Lord "is the way, the truth, and the life," so also is the Church, because the Church is one and the same with the Lord, "His body, of His flesh, and of His bones,"[2] or His "branches," rooted in Him—the living vine, and nourished by Him and growing in Him. Never represent the Church as apart from the Lord Jesus Christ, from the Father and the Holy Ghost.

[1] S. John xv. 5. [2] Eph. v. 30.

CHAPTER IV.

THE LIFE AND WORK OF A PRIEST.

§ 1. The Dignity of the Priest's Office.

Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit.—S. John xv. 16.

What a great personage a priest is! He is in constant converse with God, and God constantly replies to his speech, as whatever the ceremonies of the Church may be, whatever his prayers, he is speaking to God, and whatever the ceremonies of the Church may be and whatever his prayers, the Lord answers him. How, under these circumstances, when assaulted by passions, can the priest forget that such passions are base, impure, especially for him, and that it is impossible to let them enter into his heart, which Jesus Christ alone ought to fill entirely? A priest is an angel and not a man; everything worldly ought to be left far away behind him. O Lord, "let Thy priests be clothed with righteousness"[1]; let them always remember the greatness of their calling and do not let

[1] Psalm cxxxii. 9.

them be entangled in the nets of the world and the Devil; let them be saved from "the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things"[1] entering into their hearts.

As light and heat are inseparable from the sun, so holiness, instruction, love and compassion for all ought to be inseparable from the person of a priest; for Whose dignity does he bear?—Christ's. Of Whom does he so often communicate? Christ—God Himself, of His Body and Blood. Therefore a priest should be the same in the spiritual world, in the midst of his flock, as the sun is in nature: a light for all, life-giving warmth, the soul of all.

A priest, as the physician of souls, ought himself to be free from spiritual infirmities (that is, from the passions), in order to be able to cure others; as a pastor, he ought to be pastured himself on the grassy pasture land of the Gospel and the writings of the Holy Fathers, in order to know where to pasture his sheep; he ought to be skilful in struggling against the mental wolves, in order to know how to drive them away from Christ's flock; he ought to be skilful and mighty in prayer and abstinence; he ought not to be bound by worldly desires and delights, especially by covetousness, self-love, pride, ambition. In short, he ought to be a light

[1] S. Mark iv. 19.

himself, in order to enlighten others; to be himself the spiritual salt, in order to preserve others from spiritual corruption; and ought himself to be free from the corruption of the passions. If the reverse is the case, every spiritually sick person may say: "Physician, heal thyself"[1] first, and then I will let you heal me. "Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."[2]

How indifferent a priest should be to earthly things, in order that when celebrating such services, such high and most heavenly sacraments, he may not be ensnared by the enemy, but may always burn with pure love for God and his fellow-men, who are lost through sins and are saved by the grace of Christ in the Holy Ghost! But how greatly we are wont to sin! How strong are our earthly attachments! Even when celebrating the sacraments, we sometimes, through being accustomed to them, do not completely lay aside worldly cares and attachments, and therefore the enemy disturbs, darkens and perverts our mind, binds our heart, and takes us prisoners. And deservedly! Do not dream. A priest should be an angel by the elevation of his thoughts, by the purity of his soul and body, by the ardour of his love for God, the Creator of all things, and the Saviour, and for men, his brethren.

[1] S. Luke iv. 23. [2] S. Matt. vii. 5.

What hinders you from fulfilling Christ's commandments? The flesh and the world: that is, pleasant food and drink, which men like, in which they delight both in thought and in fact, which make the heart gross and hard—a partiality for elegant dress and adornment, or for distinctions and rewards; if the dress or adornments are made of very beautiful coloured and delicate materials, then care and anxiety arise how to avoid staining or soiling them, or getting them dusty or wet, whilst care and anxiety how to please God in thought, word, and deed vanish and the heart lives for dress and adornment, and becomes entirely engrossed in these things, ceasing to care about God and being united to Him; if such is the case with a priest, then he neglects praying for his people, and becomes not soul-loving, but money-loving and ambitious, seeking not the men hemselves, but that which appertains to them, that is, money, food, drink, their favour, their good opinion and good word, and flattering them. Therefore fight against every worldly enticement, against every material enticement that hinders you from fulfilling Christ's commandments, love God with all your heart, and care with all your strength for the salvation of your own soul, and the souls of others; be soul-loving. Remember that the world, which rose from nothing, is indeed nothingness, and will return to nothing, for heaven and earth shall pass away, but the human soul, the breath of God, the image of the immortal King,

is itself immortal. Remember all this, and renounce attachments to all earthly things. Besides looking upon corruptible creatures and created things, turn your eyes constantly to the Creator, Who is in every creature, and Who constantly looks upon you, constantly proving your heart and your thoughts. Do not cling with your heart to anything, and do not make it the god of your heart; the sole God of our heart must be the Lord God, Who created it: for our heart is His breath. Do not cleave with your whole heart unto any person, that is to any flesh, for the sole God of our heart must be the Lord God, and to Him only must we cleave. For attachment to material things, or to flesh, is a lie, an enticement of Satan and the will of the Devil. Amen.)

Passions are contagious owing to our spiritual organisation; for instance, malice, even when not yet expressed in words—not expressed by acts, but still concealed in the heart, and reflected slightly in the face and eyes—is already transmitted to the soul of the man against whom I bear malice, and is also perceptible to others; if I am disturbed by passion my disturbance communicates itself to the heart of another, like a kind of spiritual overflow of an impure current from one spiritual receptacle into another. If you eradicate in yourself your passion against your brother, you eradicate the same passion in him too; when you are pacified he will also

become pacified. What a close connection there is between souls! How true are the words of the Apostle: "For we are members one of another"[1]; "we, being many, are one bread and one body"[2]; "and hath made of one blood all nations of men."[3] Therefore the Lord's commandment requires that "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."[4] It is upon the mutual feeling or understanding of our souls that the efficacy or inefficacy of the words of a preacher is founded; if the preacher does not speak from his heart, but hypocritically, the listeners, by their inward instinct, understand the discordance of the preacher's words with his heart, with his life, and they have not the power which they might have had if the preacher had spoken to them sincerely, and especially if he had himself in reality fulfilled his words. Indeed, between human souls there is, too, a close connection and communication. This is why good, pious, sincere dispositions, and especially good works, are communicated to the souls of others.

As a priest, pray above all for the cleansing from sins, for the enlightenment and renewal of God's people, and for your own renewal; for although you often drink the Blood of the New Testament and eat the life-giving Flesh of the Lamb of God, which can speedily regenerate and renew you, nevertheless, owing to your

[1] Eph. iv. 25.
[2] 1. Cor. x. 17.
[3] Acts xvii. 26.
[4] S. Matt. xxii. 39.

negligence, you are not yet regenerate nor renewed, being given up in the depths of your heart to the same passions that were in you before. Offer, then, unto God ardent prayer for your own renewal and that of His people. This is the most pleasing sacrifice to God. Offer your prayer with faith, firm trust, and love unfeigned: for to Him Who came to make a new garment out of the old one, and to pour new wine into old bottles, prayer for renewal is like fragrant incense, and concurs with the Lord's purpose of the regeneration of the human race, decayed by sin.

A priest ought to endeavour by every means to maintain within himself courage, boldness, daring, in spite of the bodiless enemy, who continually sows in him his illusive fear, his foolish dread; otherwise he cannot be a reprover of human vices, nor a true celebrant of the sacraments. Daring is a great gift of God and a great treasure of the soul! Courage or boldness plays an important part in earthly warfare, for it simply works wonders; but in the spiritual warfare it does far more.

How pure and spiritual should be the lips of priests, who so often pronounce the most holy name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost! How still more spiritual and pure should be their hearts to contain and feel in themselves the sweetness of this most precious, glorious,

and justly-worshipped name! Oh, how far a priest should withdraw himself from carnal delights, so as not to become flesh, in which the spirit of God cannot dwell! What carnal delights can there be for a priest, when he must absolutely delight in the Lord alone, so that He may grant him the petitions of his heart? What carnal delights can there be for a priest when he has so many spiritual children disclosing to him their various spiritual or bodily infirmities, with which he must heartily sympathise, concerning which he must give sincere and wholesome advice; when he must each day wrestle in prayer for them with his whole heart and with tears before the Lord, that the mental wolf may not fall upon them and ravish them, that God may grant that they may prosper in life and faith, and in spiritual wisdom? What carnal delights can there be for a priest when he must often perform the services in the church and stand before the altar of the Lord; when he has so often to celebrate the Divine and most wonderful Liturgy, and to be the celebrant and partaker of the heavenly, immortal, and life-giving Mysteries; when, in general, he has so often to celebrate sacraments and prayers? The heart that loves carnal delights is unfaithful to the Lord. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon."[1]

[1] S. Matt. vi. 24.

§ 2. The Celebration of the Divine Liturgy.

Every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sin.—Heb. v. 1.

The celebration of the Divine Liturgy requires an elevated soul, or a man with an elevated soul, not bound by any worldly passions, desires, and attachments to earthly delights; whose heart is wholly embraced by the flame of the Holy Ghost, by ardent love for God and mankind, for every human soul, and, above all, for the Christian soul, so that with a sincere heart he may ever rise to God in prayer: "I am come to send fire on the earth: and what will I, if it be already kindled?"[1] This fire was sent down from heaven upon the Apostles in the form of tongues of fire. This fire is also necessary for us, for our frozen hearts, in order to warm, soften, to melt them again and again, to continually cleanse them, in order to enlighten and renew them. Where is there to be found such a worthy priest who, like the Seraphim, would burn before the Lord with love, praise, and gratitude for His marvels of mercy and wisdom manifested unto us and within us? I am the greatest of sinners in unworthily celebrating this most heavenly Sacrament, for I

[1] S. Luke xii. 49.

have ever an impure heart, bound by desires and attachments to earthly delights. Lord, Thou seest the depths of our hearts; but "Thou shalt purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Thou shalt wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."[1] "It is not wonderful if Thou hast mercy upon the pure; and it is not a great thing if Thou savest the righteous, but show the wonders of Thy mercy upon me, a sinner!"[2]

The Liturgy is a visible representation in persons, in various objects, words, and acts, of the birth, life, teaching, commandments, miracles, and prophecies, of the sufferings, of the crucifixion, death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven of the Founder of our faith, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Only-begotten Son of God. During the Liturgy He Himself invisibly assists, He Himself acts and accomplishes everything through the priest and deacon, who are only His instruments.

Do not think that our faith is not vivifying to us—pastors—that we serve God hypocritically. No; we before all, and more than all, avail ourselves of God's mercies, and we know by experience what the Lord Himself is to us, His sacraments, His Most pure Mother, and His saints. For instance, in partaking of the life-giving mysteries of the Blood and Body of the

[1] Psalm li. 7.

[2] Evening Prayer of S. John Damascene.

Saviour, we often, often experience in ourselves their vivifying effect, the heavenly gifts of peace and joy in the Holy Ghost; we know that the gracious gaze of a king does not rejoice the heart of the least of his subjects as the merciful gaze of our Heavenly Master, as His mysteries rejoice our hearts. And we should have been most unthankful to the Lord, and our hearts would indeed have been hardened, had we not tried to make known the glory of God's Life-giving Mysteries unto His beloved, had we not extolled His wonders, accomplished in our hearts during each celebration of the Divine Liturgy. We also experience the effect of the invincible, incomprehensible, Divine power of the Lord's glorious and life-giving cross, and by its power we drive away from our hearts evil passions, despondency, pusillanimity, fear, and other snares of the Devil. The cross is our friend and benefactor. I say this sincerely, with full belief in the truth and power of these words.

Having invoked the Holy Ghost upon the holy gifts lying before you, and having sanctified them by the prayer of consecration (during the Liturgy), remember that heaven and earth shall pass away, but the words of the Lord shall not pass away;[1] and that the bread and wine have absolutely changed into the Body and Blood of the Lord, by the will of the Lord Himself and by the operation of the Holy Ghost, even if the

[1] S. Matt. xxiv. 35.

officiating priest should be unworthy through any infirmity.

See God clearly with your spiritual vision, and when thus contemplating Him, ask of Him anything you wish, in the name of Jesus Christ, and it shall be given to you. In one single moment God will be everything to you, for He is an incomplex Being, above any time and space; and in the moments of your true faith, of your heartfelt union with Him, He will accomplish everything for you that is necessary for your own salvation, or for that of your neighbour, and you yourself will at that time be a participant of the divinity, through most sincere union with Him: "I have said, ye are gods."[1] At such a time there is no interval between God and you, there will be no interval, either, between your word and the realisation of it: as soon as you speak it will be realised, just as God Himself "spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast."[2] This is equally true both in regard to the sacraments in general, and in regard to spiritual prayer. Besides this, in the sacraments everything is accomplished for the sake of the grace of the priesthood with which the priest is invested, for the sake of the great High Priest Himself—Christ, Whose image the priest bears upon himself. Therefore, although some priests are

[1] Psalm lxxxii. 6.

[2] Psalm xxxiii. 9, cxlviii. 6.

even unworthy of their office, though they may have weaknesses, though they may be suspicious, incredulous, or distrustful, nevertheless God's Mystery is speedily accomplished, in the twinkling of an eye.

During the oblation, the whole Church, in heaven and upon earth—the Church of the first-born, inscribed in the heavens, and the Church militant, fighting against the enemies of salvation upon earth—is typically represented assembled around the Lamb, who took upon Himself the sins of the world. What a great spectacle, enrapturing and moving the soul! Is it possible that I too am among this assembly of saints; that I too am redeemed by the Lamb of God; that I too am the joint-heir with the saints, if I remain faithful to the Lamb until death? Are not all my brethren too members of this heavenly holy assemblage, and joint-heirs of the future kingdom? Oh, how widely my heart should expand in order to contain all within itself, to love all, to care for all, to care for the salvation of all as for mine own! This is wisdom and the highest wisdom. Let us be simple; let us walk in simplicity of heart with all. Let us remember our high calling and election, and let us continually aspire to the honour of God's heavenly calling through Christ Jesus. "We are the children of God . . . heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."[1]

[1] Rom. viii. 16, 17.

What greatness it is for a Christian, and above all for a Christian priest, that he becomes one with Christ and God the Saviour through the Holy Sacrament!

I myself am nothing, but by the grace of the priesthood, by bestowing upon others the Divine Body and Blood, I become the second or third means of healing sicknesses. Through me the grace of the Spirit gives new life to infants and grown persons; administers in the sacrament of the Eucharist the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, uniting believers with the Godhead; through me it looses or binds the sins of men, opens or closes heaven, gives salutary counsels, rules, etc. Oh, how venerable is the office of priest! Do you see, brethren, how many benefits the Creator and Saviour pours upon you through priests?

Lord, how shall I glorify Thee? How shall I praise Thee for Thy power, for the miracles of healing by means of Thy Holy Mysteries, manifested upon me and many of Thy servants, to whom I, an unworthy one, have administered these Thy holy, heavenly, life-giving Mysteries after the sacrament of penitence? They confess before me Thy power, Thy goodness, loudly proclaiming to all that Thou hast stretched out Thy wonder-working hand over them and raised them up from the bed of sickness, from their death-bed, when no one expected that they

would live; and then, after the communion of Thy life-giving Body and Blood, they soon revived, were healed, and felt upon them at the very same hour and day Thy life-giving Hand. And I, Lord, the witness of Thy deeds, have not hitherto praised Thee in the hearing of all for the strengthening of the faith of Thy servants, and even do not know how and when to praise Thee, for every day I am occupied with some kind of work. Create Thyself a name, Lord, as Thou hast done; glorify Thyself, Thy name, Thy Mysteries.

§ 3. The Priest saying the Divine Office.

They continued steadfastly . . . in the prayers. —Acts ii. 42.

Our priestly service is to repeat over and over again the same prayers, although very diverse, beginning with the Lord's Prayer "Our Father," as it is the duty of all men in general to fulfil the same commandments of the moral law; for it is not by the variety of prayers that the soul is strengthened, but by their repetition, and by their being brought into our hearts, our will or activity, and into our whole life.

Worthy, sincere, and reverent service to the Lord in the temple, accompanied by lively faith, is a source of peace, joy, and blessedness to our

souls. Thus a reverent priest celebrating the services, the sacraments, and the reading of the prayers, in his very duty itself finds the highest delight and blessedness for himself.

I am touched by the spirit of holy love to all mankind moving throughout all the prayers, supplications, petitions, thanksgivings, psalm-singing, and readings in the Divine service of our Orthodox Church. Oh, what ought the priest to be, the organ of this Divine heavenly mother upon earth, who unceasingly cares with such love for all her children, from the sovereign down to the lowliest peasant, from the holy governing assembly to the lowliest of the Church clergy, and not only for her true children, but also for the whole world! How full of love for all ought the pastor to be—this child of the Church, whom she has invested with the grace of the priesthood, and who draws so near to the throne of God, as one of her faithful, as the friend of God, whom she has honoured, upon whom she has bestowed such great spiritual gifts and privileges, whom she has crowned with glory and honour as the bridegroom of the Church, as the servant of Christ the King, of God the Saviour, and as the pastor of souls! How far from him should be all the passions—respect of persons, self-love, sensual carnal love, pride, enmity, love of gain, slothfulness, despondency, murmuring, and other passions! He should be penetrated and filled with Divine love for all,

and his chief care should be to stand without sin before the throne of God, to uplift his reverent hands for all men, and to save, early and late, the souls entrusted to him, redeemed by the priceless blood of Christ. "And who is sufficient for these things?" May the Lord in the multitude of His mercies grant these things unto us! For of ourselves we are cold, self-loving, malevolent, covetous, despondent, murmuring, and slothful.

You hear in church oftener than anything the voices of the priests, deacons, readers, and singers praying God to have mercy upon us. What does this signify? It signifies that all of us who are in God's temple are deserving, by our sins, of God's punishment, and that before everything—on our coming into the church—we must remember that we are sinners, and have come to the Lord of heaven and earth, to our Creator and Benefactor, Whom we have daily and hourly angered by our iniquities, to ask for mercy, each one for himself, and also, in accordance with Christian love, for others. The prayers asking for mercy are called in the Russian orthodox Church "great," "small," and "redoubled." As there is not a single superfluous word in the Church service, it is especially necessary at the time of the singing of the redoubled litany to pray to God most fervently, from the very depths of a most contrite heart, as we are reminded at the very beginning of the

litany by the words: "Let us say with our whole souls and with our whole understanding." At this time we must lay aside even the slightest coldness, the slightest inattention of heart, and, burning with the spirit of humility, becoming all attention, offer up to the Creator our most fervent prayers to have mercy upon us sinners. But what do we see at the time of the exclamations of the priest and the singing by the singers of the great and redoubled litany? For the greater part, the usual inattention and indifference on the part of those praying.

In order that a Christian should lead a Christian life, and that the life of the spirit should not be completely extinguished in him, both private prayer and public prayer are necessary for him; it is also indispensable that he should attend Divine service in the temple with faith, understanding and zeal, just as it is indispensable to pour oil into a lamp, in order that it should burn and not go out; but as sincere, fervent prayer is connected with abstinence, therefore, in order to maintain the Christian life within ourselves—that is, the ardour of faith, hope, and love—abstinence and fasting are necessary. Nothing so soon extinguishes the spirit of faith within us as intemperance, indulgence, distraction and an irregular life. My spirit is quenched, I die spiritually, when I do not celebrate service in the temple for a whole week, and my spirit becomes inflamed, I live again, in soul and heart, when I officiate, forcing

myself to prayer, not formally, but really, spiritually, sincerely, ardently.

I love to pray in God's temple, especially within the holy altar, before the Holy Table or the Prothesis, for by God's grace I become wonderfully changed in the temple. During the prayer of repentance and devotion, the thorns, the bonds of the passions, fall from my soul, and I feel so light; all the spell, all the enticement of the passions vanish, and I seem to die to the world, and the world, with all its blessings, dies for me. I live in God and for God, for God alone. I am wholly penetrated by Him, and am one spirit with Him. I become like a child soothed on its mother's knee. Then my heart is full of most heavenly, sweet peace. My soul is enlightened by the light of heaven. At such times we see everything clearly; we look upon everything rightly; we feel friendship and love towards every one, even towards our enemies, readily excusing and forgiving every one. Oh, how blessed is the soul when it is with God! Truly the Church is an earthly paradise.

I was on my way to matins. The sun was in the east, and was reflected in a lantern hanging on a post. The reflection was so full and bright that it was impossible to look at it, as it is impossible to look at the sun itself. I thought to myself, "If the material-created sun is reflected with such a fulness of radiance in

the transparent glass, then is not the mental, uncreated Sun, God, reflected in the human heart pure from sin (proceeding from its dark origin)? Is He not resplendently reflected in His saints, who, for the sake of union with Him, out of love for Him, cleansed themselves, or cleanse themselves, here 'from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God'?"[1] Yes, He is resplendently reflected in the souls of His chosen ones, and these pure souls, these images of God, like the transparent glass, shine forth like gold in the sun, like diamonds of the purest water, but they shine for God and the angels, not revealing their brightness to men, although at times, by God's ordering, they do shine even for them, when necessary, by the light of their faith, and their virtues are like a candle put on a candlestick in a room, and lighting the room with all those who are in it.[2] Also, if the created sun is reflected in the glass of a lantern, then is not the uncreated mental Sun wholly and essentially reflected in His most pure Flesh and Blood on the altar of the Lord by the action of the life-giving Holy Ghost? Yes, He is reflected with all His light and all His love, so that "he that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me and I in him."[3] The body and blood are most wholly Christ Himself.

[1] 2 Cor. vii. 1.
[2] S. Matt. v. 15.
[3] S. John vi. 56.

With what maternal, or rather Divine love the Church as though daily carries us in her arms, unceasingly raising to the Lord prayers for us all—in the evening, at midnight, in the morning, and about mid-day. She teaches us, cleanses us, sanctifies us, heals and strengthens us through the sacraments, guides us by every means in the tenderest and gentlest manner to salvation and eternal life. Blessed are those priests and ministers who understand this love and this care of the Church for the salvation of her children, and endeavour to appropriate unto themselves her spirit, to live by this spirit, to breathe by this spirit, both within and without the Church, and to offer prayers and praises, and celebrate the Divine services of the Church with heartfelt attention and reverence, remembering that through all this they save both themselves and their flock!

Take me captive, Lord, in the sweet captivity of Thy Holy Ghost, so that my words may flow "as the rivers in the south"[1] to Thy glory and to the salvation of Thy people! Grant me this sweet and powerful inward impulse to set down upon parchment the fulness of spiritual visions and feelings! Let "my tongue [be] the pen of a ready writer"[2]—of the All-Holy Spirit!

[1] Psalm cxxvi. 4. [2] Psalm xlv. 1.

§ 4. The Priest hearing Confessions.

Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself lest thou also be tempted.—Gal. vi. 1.

If "joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth,"[1] then what a joyful time for God's good angels our great Lent must be, and particularly the days of penitence and communion —the Fridays and Saturdays! And how greatly priests contribute to this their joy by carefully, paternally confessing their spiritual children! But, on the other hand, there is no more grievous time for the demons than the season of Lent; and therefore they rage more furiously and attack priests, who help God's people to sincerely repent of their sins, with special cruelty, and are especially powerful, both in church and at home, in chilling the hearts of the pious Christians who are zealous in prayer, fasting, and penitence. What pious priest and layman does not know of the demoniacal fury attacking them even during the very performance of the sacrament of penitence? The least negligence on the part of the confessing priest, the smallest unrighteous movement of the heart, and the devils enter into the heart of the priest with all their demoniacal ferocity, and torment him for a long, long while,

[1] S. Luke xv. 7, 10.

if he does not immediately drive out these uninvited guests by the most fervent prayer of repentance and lively faith.

At confession do not spare yourself, do not hurry, do not grow agitated and angry with your spiritual children who come to you. Say to yourself: "It is my pleasure to confess my spiritual children in detail; they are the sheep of my Lord. I thus offer the most pleasing sacrifice to my Lord, Who laid down His own life for us, and afford great profit to my spiritual children themselves, as well as to myself, by willingly fulfilling my important duty, and thus obtain peace of conscience."

Confession is a school of self-denial for a priest. How many occasions there are in it for impatience, irritation, slothfulness, negligence, inattention! It is truly the touchstone of the priest's love for his parishioners. A priest ought not on any account to live in softness and ease, and especially must not indulge himself with sleep and pleasant food and drinks, otherwise the Devil will strike his heart with some passion or other, and will cast him into straitness and prostration. It is necessary to crucify, absolutely to crucify, the flesh. Confession for a priest is a labour of love for his spiritual children; it must be without respect of persons, long-suffering, compassionate; for charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, seeketh not its own (its tran-

quillity or gain), is not easily provoked, rejoiceth not in iniquity, or does not connive at iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth, covereth all things, endureth all things, never faileth.[1] Then it is evident —then the priest himself sees and his spiritual children see, whether he is a shepherd or an hireling, a father or a stranger to his children, whether he seeks his own or Christ Jesus. My God, how difficult it is to confess people properly! How grievously one sins before God by not confessing them properly! How weak the word grows! How many hindrances the enemy puts in our way! How obstructed the source of the word becomes in the heart! How the tongue and intellect fail! Oh, how much preparation is required for confession! How one must pray for the successful accomplishment of this great work! And what ignorance one meets with in the spiritual children! It is necessary to be with them day and night, calmly, gently, and most patiently teaching each one of them. What a cross confession is for a priest, being conscious of the ignorance of those who confess to him, of their coldness, of their sinfulness of every kind, and having at the same time the consciousness of his own sinfulness, of his own infirmity, and languidness, the inertness of his heart to sympathy, and to zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of his neighbour, as for his own. And how many crosses the Devil lays upon one during confession! He turns the work of love, the work of

[1] 1 Cor. xiii. 4-8.

the discourse of a father with his children, into the work of an hireling with slaves, unwillingly reckoning with them.

In ministering the sacrament of penitence one feels one's own most miserable sinfulness before God, and all the misery, ignorance, and sinfulness of human nature. Confession is a cross, truly a cross! Oh, what a debtor before his spiritual children a priest feels himself to be during confession! He truly feels himself to be an insolvent debtor, a debtor guilty before the heavenly truth, and deserving of thousands of the fires of Gehenna! One sees and feels at people's deep ignorance, at their ignorance of the truths of religion, and of their sins, at their stony insensibility, that a confessor must pray for them most fervently, and teach them day and night, early and late! Oh, what ignorance! Some do not even know the Holy Trinity; they do not know Who Christ is; they do not know why they live upon earth! And what a multitude of sins! Yet meanwhile we seek enrichment, rest; we dislike labour, we become irritated when there are more of them than usual! We seek spacious abodes, rich clothing! Let us not love earthly rest, let us not become slothful, let us not be negligent in the performance of our spiritual duties, and let us not deprive ourselves of heavenly blessings and rest, for having tested the worldly rest in abundance here, what rest can we look for there?

"You will only worthily perform the sacrament of penitence when you are soul-loving and not gain-loving, when you are patient and not irritable. Oh, what great love for our neighbours' souls is necessary in order to confess them worthily, patiently, not hurriedly, and without growing angry! The priest who confesses should remember that "joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth."[1] How zealously he should, therefore, strive to awaken feelings of repentance in those who confess to him, and who sometimes do not even know what to repent of as they ought! The priest should also remember how the Apostle, night and day, with tears warned every one of the newly-enlightened Christians.[2] Every thought of gain in the service of God ought to be entirely thrown aside, trusting to God alone, the soul-lover, for recompense. Question concerning the sins, and teach with firmness and sincerity, and not indolently or with a divided heart. A firm word will call forth firm repentance, will speedily pierce the heart and draw forth tears of emotion and heartfelt contrition; but if the priest does not question firmly concerning the sins, but indolently and insincerely, then his spiritual children also, seeing the indolence and double-mindedness of their spiritual father, are not disposed to confess heartily, sincerely.

"I am only the witness that I may bear

[1] S. Luke xv. 7, 10. [2] Acts xx. 31.

witness before Him of all thou tellest me."[1] The priests will be witnesses before the Saviour on the terrible day of judgment concerning sinners, whether they repented or did not repent of these or those sins, and they who were penitent will be forgiven. But why is it necessary for God to have witnesses when He *Himself* knows everything? As has been said: "He needed not that any should testify of man: for He knew what was in man."[2] For God they are not necessary, but they are necessary for us. It will be pleasant for us to see how the priests will bear witness concerning us before the angels and men, that we repented of our sins, condemned ourselves, expressed our loathing for sin, took the firm resolution not to sin. Remember the Saviour's words to the Apostles: "Ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for My sake, for a testimony against them;"[3] or, His "Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations."[4]

I render thanks to the Lord my God, to the God of my salvation! During Passion Week the enemy hindered me just before the time of confession by striking my heart with straitness, disturbance, and evil despondency. But I

[1] From the Office of Confession, the words of the confessor to his spiritual child.

[2] S. John ii. 25.

[3] S. Mark xiii. 9.

[4] S. Matt. xxiv. 14.

prayed with my whole heart, and with undoubting faith to Him, to the God of my salvation, and said: "O God, most merciful Father! Thou spakest through Thine Only begotten Son, our Lord Christ, saying: 'Ask, and it shall be given you . . . for every one that asketh receiveth . . . or what man is there of you whom, if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone . . . how much more shall your Father, Which is in heaven, give good things to them that ask Him.'[1] Embracing by faith these Thy words in my heart, I call upon Thee: Give unto me now Thy Holy Spirit that my heart may be strengthened in performing the work of confession in the wise remission or binding of the consciences of men, in patience and benignity, in kindly and edifying behaviour with my spiritual children." And what happened? O God of mercy! I went through the whole time of confession exceedingly well; I was calm, kind, edifying, and did not experience any oppression or uneasy hurry. I glorify the merciful right hand of the most gracious Heavenly Father. Thus it is ever necessary to strengthen oneself by heartfelt prayer to the Heavenly Father before every spiritual work, as our Lord Jesus Christ Himself prayed before His manifestation to mankind before the choosing of the Apostles before His sufferings.

[1] S. Matt. vii. 7-11.

§ 5. The Priest as Preacher, and Pastor of his Flock.

Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.—2 Cor. v. 20.

Every priest is an apostle in his village or parish, and ought to go about to the different houses preaching the Kingdom of God, instructing the ignorant, awakening the careless, who are living in the passions and carnal desires, to a Christian life; encouraging and stimulating, by the hope of future recompense, those who are pious and sober-minded; strengthening and comforting the discontented. This ought specially to be the object of processions with the cross on festivals. Sometimes we priests allow ourselves to eat and drink when going about with the cross. This should not be. We must preach with the cross in our hand that "Christ came upon earth in order to raise us up to heaven"[1]; that it is not right to attach ourselves to anything earthly; and that we must value time in order to win eternity; to cleanse our hearts from every impurity, and to do as many good works as possible: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work."[2]

[1] Acathistos to the Sweetest Lord Jesus, viii.

[2] S. John iv. 34.

A self-loving man spares himself for the good of others. He even grudges his throat for the instruction of others, if he is a teacher or a priest. He grudges his whole heart, because he, so to say, serves his neighbour only with half his heart, and sometimes even quite without any heart. He grudges his physical powers, too; he is as frightened as a hare, and, being afraid of falling ill from work, prefers to take rest.

When you ask the Lord to enlighten your mind and warm your heart so that you may write a sermon, or a letter to your parents, relations, or friends, and the Lord does not seem to hear you, and you remain in darkness and coldness, do not grow faint-hearted, do not despond, do not be indignant, do not murmur at the Lord's inattention to you; for the Lord only tests your patience, your faith and hope, your devotion to Him, the Almighty. Remember that it is easy for Him to instantaneously illuminate and enlighten you, and in a few minutes you will be able to write an excellent sermon or a letter, ardent with warm feeling, full of light and elevated thoughts.

The word in the mouths of some is spirit and life, whilst in the mouths of others it is a dead letter (for instance, during prayer and preaching). "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."[1] Such should actually

[1] S. John vi. 63.

be our words too, for we are images of God the Word.

What means the heavy sleep of slothfulness and hardened unfeelingness of heart during prayer, or during the preparation of some sermon, or during the teaching of religion? It means that the grace of God is leaving us, by God's wise and good intention, in order to strengthen our hearts for our own free spiritual exertions. Sometimes grace carries us like children or guides and supports us as though by the hand. Then it is twice as easy for us to do works of virtue; whilst sometimes it leaves us alone to our weakness, in order that we should not become slothful, but should labour, and by our labour become worthy of the gift of grace. At such times we ought, as free beings, to spontaneously show our amendment and zeal to God. It would be foolish to murmur against God for depriving us of His grace; for when the Lord pleases He takes away His grace from us, fallen and unworthy creatures. At such times we must learn patience and bless the Lord: "The Lord gave [His grace], and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."[1]

You ought not to keep God's gifts to yourself, but should diffuse them upon others. Nature herself is an example to you; the sun does not keep the light to itself, but diffuses it upon the

[1] Job i. 21.

earth and moon. Pastors especially ought not to keep their—or, rather, God's—light to themselves, but should abundantly diffuse the light of their intelligence and knowledge upon others.

You are a being endued with speech. Remember that you derive your origin from the word of the Creator of all things, and that in union (through faith) with the creative Word, by means of faith, you can yourself be a material and spiritual creator. Believe that by your faith in the creative word of the Father, your own word, too, shall not return to you vain, powerless (when, for instance, you pray to God, the Benefactor, in accordance with the holy Church's direction or the Lord's guidance), but it shall bring you the gift necessary for good deeds; believe that through faith in the creative Word you will not be unsuccessful in teaching people either in the temple during Divine service, or during the celebration of the sacraments in private houses; neither shall your teaching in schools be unsuccessful, but it shall rouse up the minds and hearts of those listening to you.

We preachers have only to assist the action of God upon the hearts of men, to seize their inclination for repentance and to strengthen it.

When I read the Gospel, then it is not I that speak, but the Lord Himself; He Himself is in these words. For He is the Spirit, the

Wisdom, or the infinite personal Thought; it is He Himself Who is in these wonderful thoughts and words of the Gospel. Only the word is ours, human; or, rather, even the word is also His; whilst the thought, its essence, truth, is the Lord Himself. I see the same, for instance, in the image of the Saviour or His cross. Again, He Himself is there—my omnipresent Lord is in them, in this image or in that cross, as in the word of the Gospel. His image on the icon or on the cross is only an outward appearance, whilst the essence is He Himself—manifesting Himself everywhere, in everything and through everything, and especially through the images and signs upon which His justly-worshipped Name is inscribed or His representation is drawn. So also He is in the priest's blessing by the sign of the cross, in which He Himself appears, and as though Himself blesses. Hence the importance of a priest's blessing. And even our customary making of the sign of the cross has also God's power, if only we make it with faith. Thus everywhere we may find and feel the Lord.

What can be firmer, more unchangeable and mightier than the word? By the word the world was created and exists; "upholding all things by the word of His power;"[1] and yet we sinners treat words so lightly, so negligently. For what do we show less respect than for the

[1] Heb. i. 3.

word? What is more changeable in us than the word? Oh, how accursed are we men! How inattentive we are to such precious things! We do not remember that by means of the word proceeding from a believing and loving heart, we may perform life-giving miracles for our own souls and for the souls of others; for instance, in prayer at Divine service; in sermons, at the celebration of the sacrament! Christian! value every word; be attentive to every word; be firm in the word; trust in every word of God, and of the saints, as in the words of life. Remember that the word is the beginning of life.

Many and various are the obstacles upon the narrow way: you wish to pray—the enemy oppresses you both spiritually and physically; you feel it your duty to write a sermon; you are oppressed by slothfulness; oppression is everywhere. The smoke of hell endeavours to darken and straiten your soul even when the most holy and terrible Sacrifice lies before you, when you communicate of It, and also at the time of the celebration of all the sacraments. The greater the holy office, the more violently and furiously the enemy attacks you.

To my pupils. You are my children, for I have begotten you through the Gospel in Jesus Christ, my spiritual blood, for my teaching flows in your veins. I have given and give you to drink of the milk of the Word, as a mother from her breast.

You are my children, and therefore you are ever in my heart, and I pray for you. You are my children because you are my spiritual children. You are my children because, as a priest, I am truly a father, and you yourselves call me father. "My children!" This word is very displeasing to the Devil, who is the cause of dislike, malice, and hypocrisy; but I, God helping me, will not even for a moment obey Him, and will not call you otherwise than my children; for you are my children by faith, by the Church of God, and by the instruction and fatherly guidance you receive from me. One can only truly call others' children "my children" by the Holy Spirit, by the Spirit of truth and love.

I sometimes pray in church for God's people thus: Here, Lord, many of these who are standing in Thy temple stand before Thee with their souls idle, like empty vessels, and "know not what to pray for as they ought"; fill Thou their hearts now at this favourable time for them, in this day of salvation, by the grace of Thine All-holy Spirit, and give them to me at my prayer, to my love, filled with the knowledge of Thy goodness, and with heartfelt contrition and devotion, as full vessels; give to them Thy Holy Ghost, that "maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."[1] I myself, their pastor, am sinful and impure above all men, but do not consider my sins, Lord, despise them

[1] Rom. viii. 26.

according to Thy great mercy, and hear my prayer at this hour, for the sake of the grace of the priesthood resting on me and dwelling in me. Grant, Lord, that this grace may not be idle in me, but that it may ever burn in me with faith, hope, love, and son-like boldness in prayer for Thy people!

When your heart is struck by the enemy nestling within you, and causing in you disturbance, straitness, and depression of spirit, do not then preach a sermon, lest, instead of profit, it should give rise to temptation; lest, instead of spiritual nourishment, it should cause spiritual dizziness and sickness. Neither administer any reproofs at such times: these would only irritate, and not correct. In general, when the enemy nestles in your soul, it is better to be more silent; we are then unworthy of the word, which is the gift of the Hypostatic Word. First drive out the enemy, bring peace to dwell in your heart, and hen speak.

Priests of God! learn how to turn the bed of sorrow of the Christian sufferer into one of joy by the consolation of faith; learn how to make him, instead of—in his opinion—the most unfortunate, the happiest of men; assure him that having been "a little chastised" he "shall be greatly rewarded"[1] afterwards, and you will be the friends of mankind, angels of consolation,

[1] Wisdom iii. 5.

instruments or ministers of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter.

The sign of the cross as a blessing from a priest or a bishop is an expression of the blessing or of the favour of God to a man in Christ and for Christ's sake. What a joyful, significative, and precious ceremony this is! Blessed are all who receive such a blessing with faith! How attentive should the priests themselves be in bestowing their blessing upon the faithful! "And they shall put My name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them."[1]

A true shepherd and father of his flock will live in their grateful memory even after his death. They will extol him; and the less he cares to be extolled here on earth on account of his zealous labours for their salvation, the more his glory shall shine after his death: even when he is dead he will make them speak of him. Such is the glory of those who labour for the common good.

My sweetest Saviour! having come down from heaven for the service of mankind, Thou didst not only preach the Word of Heavenly Truth in the temple, but Thou wentest through the towns and villages; Thou didst not shun any one; Thou visitedst the houses of all, especially of those whose fervent repentance Thou didst

[1] Num. vi. 27.

foresee with Thy Divine gaze. Thus Thou didst not remain sitting at home, but wert in loving intercourse with all. Grant to us, too, to be in such loving intercourse with Thy people, so that we pastors should not shut ourselves up in our houses away from Thy sheep as if in castles or prisons, only coming out of them for services in the church or to officiate in the houses of others, only out of duty, only with prayers learned by heart. May our lips be freely opened to discourse with our parishioners in the spirit of faith and love. May our Christian love for our spiritual children be opened and strengthened by animated, free, and fatherly conversation with them. Oh what sweetness, what bliss Thou hast concealed, Lord, our boundless Love, in the spiritual converse warmed by love of a spiritual father with his spiritual children! And how is it possible not to strive upon earth with all our might after such bliss? Yet it is only a faint beginning, only a faint likeness of the heavenly bliss of love! Especially love the communion of good works, both material and spiritual. "To do good and to communicate forget not."[1]

[1] Heb. xiii. 16.

§ 6. The Priest in Intercession.

I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that are the Lord's remembrancers keep not silence.—Isa. lxii. 6.

Priest of God! believe with your whole heart, believe always in the grace given to you from God, to pray for God's people. Let not this gift of God be in vain in you, for by it you can save many souls. The Lord speedily hears your heartfelt prayer for His people, and is easily inclined to have mercy upon them, as He had at Moses', Aaron's, Samuel's, and the Apostles' prayers. Avail yourself of every opportunity for prayer—in church, when you celebrate Divine service or a sacrament, in private houses, at the ministering of the sacraments, during prayers and thanksgivings; everywhere and at all times think of the salvation of God's people, and you shall also obtain great grace of God for yourself.

Believe that the prayer even of one friend of God, especially a priest of God, who lives a holy life, can work wonders upon a considerable part of nature, as the prayers of the prophets Moses, Elijah, and others. Therefore, live in a manner pleasing to God, especially you who are priests of God; be holy, pure, meek, humble, merciful, temperate, laborious, patient, and your

prayer shall always penetrate the heavens, and shall be heard and fulfilled. Always pray with your whole heart, and, above all, with a pure heart. "There was given unto the angel much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand."[1] And to you also this incense is given. The censer with the incense ought always to remind you of this—that is, of how easily your prayer for yourself, and "for the errors of the people"[2] and their iniquities, ascends to God and is accepted by Him.

You desire some spiritual blessing, either for yourself or some one else, or for all, but the Lord desires the same, long, long before you, and is ready to grant this blessing to you and others; only readiness to accept the Divine gift is required; it only requires some worthiness in those who are to receive it, for God is infinite mercy, infinite goodness, and is always ready to grant every blessing, and often bestows it even before we ask for it, and, in every case, "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think."[3] Therefore, it is always with hope and boldness that I ask spiritual and even material blessings of the Lord, when these

[1] Rev. viii. 3, 4. [2] Heb. ix. 7.
[3] Eph. iii. 20.

latter are needful, and the Lord grants them, in accordance with His faithful promise: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."[1]

When you pray with tears and love for the Lord's sheep, and your thoughts praise you to yourself, then say to them: It is not I who prayed for God's people, but the "Spirit itself" within me "maketh intercession" for them "with groanings which cannot be uttered"[2]: and the Spirit bound me, too, at that time, in the sweet bonds of His love and of heartfelt devotion. That this is true is evident from the fact that the sweetness of prayer and love can very soon forsake me.

A certain person who was sick unto death from inflammation of the bowels for nine days, without having obtained the slightest relief from medical aid, as soon as he had communicated of the Holy Sacrament, upon the morning of the ninth day, regained his health, and rose from his bed of sickness on the evening of the same day. He received the Holy Communion with firm faith. I prayed to the Lord to cure him. "Lord," said I, "heal Thy servant of his sickness. He is worthy, therefore grant him

[1] S. Matt. vii. 7, 8. [2] Rom. viii. 26.

this. He loves Thy priests, and sends them his gifts." I also prayed for him in church before the altar of the Lord, at the Liturgy, during the prayer: "Thou Who hast given us grace at this time, with one accord to make our common supplication unto Thee," and before the most Holy Mysteries themselves. I prayed in the following words: "Lord, our life! It is as easy for Thee to cure every malady as it is for me to think of healing. It is as easy for Thee to raise every man from the dead as it is for me to think of the possibility of the resurrection from the dead. Cure, then, Thy servant Basil of his cruel malady, and do not let him die; do not let his wife and children be given up to weeping." And the Lord graciously heard, and had mercy upon him, although he was within a hair's-breadth of death. Glory to Thine omnipotence and mercy, that Thou, Lord, hast vouchsafed to hear me!

The prayer of a priest for men has great power with God, if only the priest calls upon the Lord with his whole heart, with faith and love. God grant that there may be more priests who would pray to God with an ardent spirit; for who should pray to the Lord for His sheep with such power, if not the priest, who has received grace and authority to do so from God Himself?

The children Paul and Olga, by the infinite

mercy of the Lord, in accordance with mine unworthy prayer, have been cured of the spirit of infirmity by which they were attacked. In the case of the child Paul, his malady passed away through sleep, and the child Olga became quiet in spirit, and her little face grew bright instead of dark and troubled. Nine times I went to pray with bold trust, hoping my trust might not be shamed; that to him that knocketh it would be opened; that even on account of my importunity, God would fulfil my requests; that if the unjust judge at last satisfied the woman who troubled him, then still more the Judge of all, the most righteous Judge, would satisfy my sinful prayer for the innocent children; that He would consider my labour, my intercession, my prayerful words, my kneeling, my boldness, my trust in Him. And the Lord did so; He did not cover me, a sinner, with shame. I came for the tenth time to their home, and the children were well. I gave thanks unto the Lord and to our most speedy Mediatrix.

Lord, accept my tearful prayer for my spiritual children, and for all orthodox Christians who seek to please Thee, and receive it as my care for their salvation, as my pastoral care! Be to them Thyself, in accordance with my prayer, both the voice and the trumpet, awakening them from their sinful sleep, the eye watching over their hearts, the hand guiding them on their

journey to the heavenly country, and raising up those who fall through incredulity, faint-heartedness, and despondency; be to them the motherly love—in which I myself am so deficient—tenderly caring for their true welfare; be "all things to all men,"[1] that some may be saved. For Thou art, in truth, the one Pastor, invisibly and secretly pasturing the souls of men. Thou art the one, true, and most wise Teacher, speaking in the very hearts of Thy people. Thou art the one true Lover of Thy creatures and children by grace; Thou art an abyss of wisdom and omnipotence; Thou alone art ever-vigilant and unwearying, and teachest us Thy ways, even during our sleep. Be then Thyself, Lord, instead of me, the Pastor and Teacher of Thy sheep, which Thou hast entrusted to me; lead them Thyself to grassy pasture lands; guard them Thyself from spiritual and carnal wolves; guide Thou their feet into the way of truth, righteousness, and peace. Be unto them instead of me, light, eyes, mouth, hands, and wisdom; but, above all, be unto them the love in which I, a sinner, am so wanting!

[1] 1 Cor. ix. 22.

CHAPTER V.

PENITENCE.

§ 1. Self-examination.

Try me, O God, and seek the ground of my heart: prove me, and examine my thoughts. Look well if there be any way of wickedness in me: and lead me in the way everlasting.—Psalm cxxxix. 23, 24.

From the time since the first man sinned men became so darkened by sin in the very centre of their being (in their hearts), that they very often have not any consciousness and feeling of the omnipresence of God, and think that four walls and a ceiling can conceal them from Him, Who fills all things, Who sees even those who hide themselves in secret places. "Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth?"[1] "I was naked, and I hid myself."[2] But it did not avail!

Watch your heart during all your life—examine

[1] Jer. xxiii. 24. [2] Gen. iii. 10.

it, listen to it, and see what prevents its union with the most blessed Lord. Let this be for you the science of all sciences, and with God's help you will easily observe what estranges you from God, and what draws you towards Him and unites you to Him. It is the evil spirit more than anything that stands between our hearts and God; he estranges God from us by various passions, or by the desires of the flesh, by the desires of the eyes, and by worldly pride.

Examine yourself oftener; where the eyes of your heart are looking. Are they turned towards God and the life to come, towards the most peaceful, blessed, resplendent, heavenly, holy powers dwelling in heaven? Or are they turned towards the world, towards earthly blessings; to food, drink, dress, abode, to sinful vain men and their occupations? Oh that the eyes of our heart were always fixed upon God! But it is only in need or misfortune that we turn our eyes to the Lord, whilst in the time of prosperity our eyes are turned towards the world and its vain works. But what, you would ask, will this looking to God bring me? It will bring the deepest peace and tranquillity to your heart, light to your mind, holy zeal to your will, and deliverance from the snares of the enemy. "Mine eyes are ever looking unto the Lord," said David, and gave the reason for it: "For He shall pluck my feet out of the net."[1] "For He

[1] Psalm xxv. 15.

shall speak peace unto His people, and to His saints, that they turn not again." [1]

Sin closes the spiritual eyes; the thief thinks that God does not see; the fornicator, giving himself up to impurity, thinks that God does not see him; the covetous, the greedy, the drunkard, think that they can hide themselves and their sinful passions. But God sees and judges. "I was naked, and I hid myself" [2]—so by his actions, says every sinner, hiding himself from the omnipresent God.

The greatest continual error of our heart against which we ought unceasingly to struggle during our whole lifetime—at night, in the morning, and during the day—is the secret thought that we can be anywhere and at any time without God and outside Him even for a single moment. We must unceasingly strengthen our heart in God, from Whom it continually mentally turns away; and great progress in the Christian life would be attained by him who could sincerely exclaim with Hannah, the mother of Samuel, "My heart is strengthened [rejoiceth] in the Lord; mine horn is exalted in the Lord: my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; because I rejoice in Thy salvation." [3]

It is necessary to wash ourselves from the dirt,

[1] Psalm lxxxv. 8. [2] Gen. iii. 10.
[3] 1 Sam. ii. 1 (according to Russian Version, "strengthened" or "stablished").

and prayer is washing ourselves from spiritual filth, that is, from sins, especially tearful prayer.

We sin in thought, word, and deed. In order to become pure images of the Most Holy Trinity, we must strive that our thoughts, words, and deeds may be holy. Thought corresponds, in God, to the Father, the word to the Son, and the deed to the all-accomplishing Holy Ghost. The sins of thought are not an unimportant matter for the Christian, because all that is pleasing to God in us is comprised, according to Saint Macarius of Egypt, in thoughts, for the thoughts are the beginning from which words and deeds proceed: words, because they either benefit those who hear them or are corrupt and tempt others, perverting their hearts and thoughts; and deeds, still more, because examples act more powerfully than anything upon people, inciting them to imitate them.

Conscience in men is nothing else but the voice of the omnipresent God moving in the hearts of men, as He Who alone Is and has created everything, the Lord, knows all as Himself—all the thoughts, desires, intentions, words, and works of men, present, past, and future. However far in front I may let my thoughts, my imagination run, He is there before me and I ever inevitably finish my course in Him, ever having Him as the witness of my ways. His "eyes are open upon all the ways

of the sons of men."[1] "Whither shall I go then from Thy Spirit, or whither shall I go then from Thy presence?"[2]

Oh, if we turned our attention to the consequences of our sins or of our good works! How careful we should then be to shun sin, and how zealous in all that is good! For we should then clearly see that every sin not eradicated in time becomes strengthened by habit, becomes deeply rooted in a man's heart, and sometimes troubles, torments, and wounds him until death, becoming, so to say, awakened and revived in him upon every occasion, reminding him of the sin formerly committed, and thus defiling his thoughts, feelings, and conscience. Streams of tears are necessary to wash away the inveterate filthiness of sin. How tenacious and malignant it is! Whilst, on the contrary, every good action done at any time sincerely, disinterestedly, or having become a habit by repetition, rejoices our hearts and forms the joy and comfort of our life by the consciousness that we have not spent our life entirely in vain, full of sins though it is; that we are like men and not beasts; that we, too, are created after the image of God, and that there is a spark of the Divine light and love in us; that, although they are but few, our good works will form a counterpoise for our evil ones in the balance of God's incorruptible righteousness.

[1] Jer. xxxii. 19. [2] Psalm cxxxix. 7.

When the heart is pure, then the whole man is pure; when the heart is unclean, the whole man is unclean: "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. . . ."[1] But the saints all acquired pure hearts by fasting, vigilance, prayer, pious meditation, by reading the Word of God, martyrdom, labour, and sweat; and the Holy Ghost abode in them, cleansed them from every impurity, and sanctified them by eternal sanctification. Strive also, above all, for the cleansing of your heart. "Make me a clean heart, O God."[2]

How corrupt I am become through sin! Anything bad, evil, impure, immediately enters into my thoughts and is felt in my heart, whilst anything good, right, pure, holy—is often only thought and spoken of, and not felt. Woe unto me! for as yet evil is nearer to my heart than good. Besides this, we are at once ready to do evil as soon as it is thought of or felt, and we do it quickly and easily if we have no fear of God, whilst "how to perform that which is good I find not"[3] the power within me, and the intended good work is often put off indefinitely.

[1] Rom. vii. 18. [2] S. Matt. xv. 19.
[3] Psalm li. 10

§ 2. Pride.

God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.—1 Peter v. 5.

On the manifestation of the pride of Satan in men.—Pride generally shows itself chiefly in the fact that the man who is infected with it makes himself equal to all, or at any rate to many, who are his superiors in age, power, abilities, and cannot bear to be considered beneath them. If a proud man is a subordinate, he does not respect his chief as he ought, does not like to salute him, does not respect his orders, but fulfils them unwillingly, only out of fear. He makes himself equal to all educated people and does not acknowledge any one's superiority over himself, or only acknowledges the superiority of a very, very few indeed. If he is a learned or even an unlearned son, he does not pay due respect to his parents and benefactors, especially those who are simple and rough, considering them equal to or even lower than himself. You must take the utmost care not to compare yourself with others in any respect, but always to put yourself below others, although you may really be better or equal to others in some respects. Everything good in us comes from God and is not our own. "And that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast."[1] "All these worketh that one

[1] Eph. ii. 8, 9.

and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will."[1] And how can we be proud of the good that does not belong to us and equal ourselves to those who have been placed by God and general confidence higher than us? Therefore, "sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden." "For every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and He that humbleth himself shall be exalted."[2]

Our self-love and pride manifest themselves especially in impatience and irritability when some of us cannot bear the slightest unpleasantness intentionally, or even unintentionally, caused us by others; or obstacles lawfully or unlawfully, intentionally or unintentionally, opposed to us by men, or caused by the objects surrounding us. Our self-love and pride would like everything to be as we wish, that we should be surrounded by every honour and comfort of this temporal life; would like all men, and even —how far is pride carried!—all nature itself, to speedily and silently obey a sign from us; whilst, alas! we ourselves are very slow to faith and to every good work—slow to please the one Master of all. Christian! you must absolutely be humble, meek, and long-suffering; remembering that you are clay, dust, nothingness; that you are impure; that everything good that you

[1] 1 Cor. xii. 4, 11.

[2] S. Luke xiv. 8, xviii. 14.

have is from God ; that your life, your breath and everything you possess are God's gifts ; that for your sins of disobedience and intemperance you ought now to redeem your future blessedness in Paradise by the long-suffering which is indispensable in this world of imperfections and innumerable transgressions of the fallen men living together with us, and forming the numerous members of the one sin-sullied human race. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." [1] He who is impatient and irritable does not know himself and the human race, and is unworthy of the name of Christian. In saying this, I pronounce judgment against myself, for I am the first of those who are afflicted with impatience and irritability.

A proud man, at the time when other people are speaking of any other person's virtues, is wickedly afraid lest this person should be superior to him in virtues, and should eclipse him, for the proud man considers himself above all, and does not think it possible to find similar or higher virtues in others. The rivalry of others is a great misfortune to him.

What is above all desirable for man? The avoidance of sin, the remission and forgiveness of sins and the attainment of holiness. Wherefore? Because sins, such as, for instance, pride, evil behaviour towards our neighbours, wicked

[1] Gal. vi. 2.

suspiciousness, coveteousness, avarice, envy, etc., separate us from God, the Source of life, withdraw us from fellowship with other men, and plunge us into spiritual death; whilst gentle, humble, and kind behaviour to all, even to our enemies, simplicity, disinterestedness, contentedness with little and with the indispensable, generosity to every one, goodwill and all other virtuous qualities, unite us to God, the Source of life, and to other men by endearing us to them. Grant then, Lord, that we may entirely flee from sin; that we may accustom ourselves to every virtue, through Thy grace. Yea, Master, Lord, without Thee we, "being evil,"[1] can do no good thing.

Sometimes the enemy uses his wiles against us in such a manner that when we see any sin or vice in our brother, or in society, he strikes our heart with indifference and coldness and reluctance, or rather with shameful cowardice, to say a firm, accusatory word against the iniquity, to break the horn of the sinner. Christ, my King! give me apostolic zeal and the fire of the Holy Ghost in my heart, so that I may ever boldly rise up against insolent vice, especially against the vice that corrupts many; and may I not spare any one, both for the sake of their own salvation and that of the rest of Thy people, in order that they should not be seduced, seeing the overflow of vice, and that they should

[1] S. Matt. xii. 34.

not themselves fall! "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea,"[1] "For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost."[2]

Flatterers are our greatest enemies. They blind our eyes, do not let us see our many defects, and thus hinder us upon the way to perfection, especially if we ourselves are self-loving and not far-seeing. This is why we must always stop those who flatter us, or avoid them. Woe unto him who is surrounded by flatterers! Happy is he who is surrounded by simple-hearted people who do not hide the truth, although it may be unpleasant! For instance, when they detect his weaknesses, faults, passions, and mistakes.

When the foolish thought of counting up any of your good works enters into your head, immediately correct your fault and rather count up your sins, your continual and innumerable offences against the all-merciful and righteous Master, and you will find that their number is as the sand of the sea, whilst your virtues in comparison with them are as nothing.

[1] S. Matt. xviii. 6. [2] S. Matt. xviii. 11.

§ 3. Malice.

Charity suffereth long, and is kind.—1 Cor. xiii. 4.

Fear malice as you fear the fire; do not admit it into your heart, even upon any plausible pretence, and still less by reason of anything disagreeable to you; malice is always an evil, a child of hell. Sometimes malice enters the heart under the pretence of zeal for the glory of God or the good of our neighbour. Do not believe in your zeal in this case; it is false and unwise; rather be zealous that there should not be any malice in you. God is glorified by nothing so much as by the "charity that beareth all things," and is dishonoured and offended by nothing so much as by malice, under whatever fair appearance it may hide itself. It was under the mask of caring for the poor that Judas, hiding his malice against his Lord, sold Him for thirty pieces of silver. Remember that the enemy unwearyingly seeks your destruction, and attacks you at the time when you least expect it. His malice is infinite. Do not bind yourself by self-love and sensuality, lest they take you an easy prisoner.

When malice against any one is roused in your heart, then believe with your whole heart that it is the work of the Devil working in your heart: hate him and his brood, and malice will

leave you. (Do not acknowledge it as anything of your own, and do not sympathise with it.) This is from experience. Unfortunately, the Devil shelters himself behind us, and conceals himself, whilst we are blind, and, thinking we are doing everything of ourselves, begin to stand up for the Devil's works as if they were our own, as if for something just, although every idea of there being any justice in our passion is entirely false, impious, and hurtful. Guide yourself by the same rule also in regard to others. When you see that anybody bears malice against you, do not consider his malice as his own doing; no, he is only the passive instrument of the evil one; he has not yet recognised his flattery and is deceived by him. Pray to God that the enemy may leave him and that the Lord may enlighten the eyes of his heart, darkened by the poisonous, noxious breathing of the spirit of evil. We must pray fervently for all those subjected to passions, for the enemy works within them.

You are angry with your neighbour, you despise him, do not like to speak peaceably and lovingly to him, because there is something harsh, abrupt, careless, unpleasant to you in his character, in his speech, in his manners—because he is more conscious of his dignity than perhaps is necessary; or because he may be somewhat proud and disrespectful; but you yourself, your neighbour's physician and teacher, are more

guilty than he. "Physician, heal thyself."[1] Teacher, teach yourself. Your own malice is the bitterest of all evils. Is it then possible to correct malice by means of evil? Having a beam in your own eye, can you pull out the mote from the eye of another? Evil and faults are corrected by good, by love, kindness, meekness, humility, and patience. Acknowledge yourself as the greatest of sinners, of those who appear to you to be sinners, or are sinners in reality; consider yourself worse and lower than all; wrest out all pride and malice against your neighbour, all impatience and fury, and only then try to cure others. Until then cover the sins of others with your indulgent love. What would it be if every one were to notice all their neighbour's iniquities? Eternal animosity and discord; for who is without sin? And, therefore, we are commanded to forgive all those who trespass against us; for if the Lord will be extreme to mark our iniquities, who of us may abide before His justice?[2] "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you."[3] We stand before the altar of love in the presence of Incarnate Love Himself, but we have no love to each other. How strange it is! And we do not even care about this. But love will not come of itself without our zeal, efforts and activity.

[1] S. Luke iv. 23. [2] Psalm cxxx. 3.
[3] S. Matt. vi. 14.

The Christian has no reason to have in his heart any ill-feeling whatever against any one—such ill-feeling, like every other evil, is the work of the Devil; the Christian must only have love in his heart; and as love cannot think of evil, he cannot have any ill-feeling against others. For instance, I must not think that any one else is evil or proud without having positive reasons to think so, or I must not think that it will make him proud if I show him respect, or that if I forgive him he will again offend me and will mock at me. We must not let evil in any form nestle in our heart; but evil generally appears in too many forms.

Do not give way to the dark evil inclinations in your heart against your neighbour, but conquer them and uproot them by the power of faith, by the light of a sound mind, and you will become kind and gentle. "I have walked innocently."[1] Such inclinations frequently arise in the depths of the heart. He who has not learned to subdue them will be often gloomy, melancholy, a burden to himself and to others. When they come to you, force yourself to be cordially disposed; to mirth and innocent jests; and the evil inclinations will be dispersed like smoke. This is from experience.

Grant, Lord, that I may ever love each of my neighbours as myself, and not be angry with

[1] Psalm xxvi. 1.

them for any cause, and not serve the Devil in this way. Grant that I may crucify my self-love, pride, covetousness, incredulity, and other passions. Let mutual love be our name; grant that we may believe and trust that the Lord is everything to us all; that we may not be careful or anxious for anything; that Thou, our God, may truly be the sole God of our heart and nothing besides Thee. Let there be union of love between us as there ought to be, and let everything that divides us from each other, and prevents us from loving one another, be despised by us, like the dust trampled under foot. So be it! So be it! If God has given us Himself, if He abides in us and we in Him, according to His own true words, then what will He not give me, what will He not spare for me, of what will He deprive me, how can He forsake me? "The Lord is my shepherd: therefore can I lack nothing."[1] "Shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"[2] And therefore, my soul, be perfectly at rest and know nothing but love. "These things I command you, that ye love one another."[3]

[1] Psalm xxiii. 1. [2] Rom. viii. 32.
[3] S. John xv. 17.

§ 4. Sins of the Flesh.

Now the works of the flesh are manifest. . . . And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.—Gal. v. 19-24.

The spirit is powerful, mighty, and therefore it easily bears a heavy substance; whilst the flesh is inert, feeble, and is therefore easily overwhelmed by its own natural substance. This is why God by the word of His power upholds all things.[1] Similarly the spirit of a man blessed with grace, by God's help, easily conquers his own flesh, and even the flesh of others (as we see in the saints), easily masters during prayer the meaning of the words, filling them with his spirit; whilst the carnal man is in constant subjection to his flesh, is oppressed by the words of the prayer, which he is unable to endue with the spirit, being flesh himself, or is unable to penetrate into its pure, holy spirit with his own impure carnal spirit.

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."[2] How bring these words into our life and actions? How long will our greediness, self-indulgence, surfeiting, and drunkenness continue? How long will our abominable

[1] Heb. i. 3. [2] S. Matt. iv. 4.

avarice and love of money continue? How long will our pride, animosity and malice against our neighbour, through money, dress, houses, food, and drink last? Thousands of Satan's deceits, by means of food, dress, and money, disclose themselves to our spiritual vision, and yet we still continue to be allured by his enticements as though by something real, useful to us, whilst in fact we are caring for neither more nor less than destructive illusions, and for that which is most pernicious both spiritually and bodily to our own selves. Do not believe, brethren, in the enemy's enticements, not for one single moment, when the matter concerns food and drink, however plausible they may apparently be. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."[1] "I spake not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees," "which is hypocrisy."[2] Pay the utmost attention to faith and piety. "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you."[3] Give away even the last that you have, if there is need of it, remembering the words of the Saviour: "If any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke

[1] S. Matt. vi. 33.
[2] S. Matt. xvi. 11; S. Luke xii. 1.
[3] S. John vi. 27.

also"[1]—that is, give away the last that you have.

As long as we lead a carnal life, and do not heartily draw near to God, so long will the demons hide themselves within us, concealing themselves under the form of various passions: greediness after food and drink, adulterous passion, pride, and arrogant free thought concerning religion, concerning the Church, and the dogmas of faith, malice, envy, avarice, covetousness, so that we live in accordance with their will; but as soon as we begin to truly serve the Lord, and thus provoke and strike home at the demons of our passions nestling in us, then they take up arms against us with all their infernal malice, with all their fiery inflammability and manifold violent, burning attachments to earthly things, until we drive them out of us by fervent prayer or by the Communion of the Holy Sacrament. Thus it sometimes happens that those who are possessed with evil spirits remain tranquil until they are brought near something holy, but as soon as they approach it they are overtaken by an extraordinary power, by a repulsion for the holy thing, by blasphemy, by spitting at the holy thing, by piercing screams. This is the explanation of the fact why those possessed with evil spirits scream in church during Divine service or when they approach the relics of saints; it is because the demons are

[1] S. Matt. v. 40.

met by the blessed power, which is hateful to them and stronger than them, which burns, oppresses, strikes them righteously, and drives them out of their beloved dwellings.

There is sometimes such hardened unfeelingness in the soul that you do not perceive and do not feel your sins. You do not fear either death or the Judge, or the terrible judgment-seat; you do not care a jot, as the saying is, about anything spiritual. O cunning, proud, evil flesh! It is not without reason that even the saints complain: "I am overcome by the slumber of sloth, and the sleep of sin oppresses my heart. Avail thyself, my soul, of the time for repentance; shake off the heavy sleep of sloth, and hasten to watch." Sometimes your soul is filled with such terrible slothfulness and hardened unfeelingness that you completely despair of being able to drive away this slothfulness and unfeelingness. It seems as if bodily sickness would be preferable to such spiritual slothfulness.

One of the most powerful wiles of the Devil is to weaken the heart through slothfulness, and with it all the spiritual and bodily powers. At such times faith, hope, and love are dried up in the heart; we become faithless, despondent, insensible towards God and men: the salt has lost its savour.

Most men not only bear Satan's burden

willingly in their hearts, but they become so accustomed to it that they often do not feel it, and even imperceptibly increase it. Sometimes, however, the evil enemy increases his burden tenfold, and then they become terribly despondent and fainthearted, they murmur and blaspheme God's name. The usual means that men of our time take to drive away their anguish are—entertainments, cards, dancing, and theatres. But such means afterwards increase still more the anguish and weariness of their hearts. If, happily, they turn to God, then the burden is removed from their heart, and they clearly see that previously the heaviest burden was lying on their heart, though frequently they did not feel it. Oh, how many men there are who have "forsaken [God] the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cistern, that can hold no [living] water." [1] Men have very many such broken cisterns—nearly everybody has his own. The broken cisterns are our hearts, our passions.

Our modern idolatry in Christianity consists in self-love, ambition, worldly pleasures, gluttony and love of gain, adultery. It is this that has completely turned away our eyes and hearts from God and the heavenly country, and has nailed us to the earth. It is this that has uprooted brotherly love, and has set us against one another. Woe! woe! unto us!

[1] Jer. ii. 13.

The Word of God says, "Be not drunk with wine";[1] whilst you builders of public-houses say, "Get drunk with wine," and have built thousands of public-houses to tempt your brethren. And yet you go to church and pray in your homes. "They flatter with their tongues. Destroy Thou them, O God; let them perish through their own imaginations; cast them out into the multitude of their ungodliness: for they have rebelled against Thee."[2]

O Lord! ever give me a meek heart, a bright, straightforward, and kind look. Grant it, Lord! Glory to Thee for the change accomplished in me by Thy right hand. I thank Thee for having taken away from me the burning thorns of my passions, my straitness, my shame and mine infirmities, and for having bestowed upon me peace, tranquillity, freedom, power, and boldness. Strengthen, then, in me that which Thou hast accomplished in me. Glory to the power of faith, to the power of prayer; for everything that I ask of Thee, believing in prayer, I receive in accordance with Thy word.[3] I thank Thee for raising me from the dead so many times,[4] and for destroying the kingdom of death and sin within me.

[1] Eph. v. 18.
[2] Psalm v. 10.
[3] S. Mark xi. 24.
[4] 2 Cor. i. 9.

§ 5. Contrition.

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit.—Psalm li. 17.

"The Lord turned and looked upon Peter . . . and Peter went out, and wept bitterly."[1] And even now, when the Lord looks upon us we weep bitterly over our sins. Yes, our tears during prayer mean that the Lord has looked upon us with His gaze, that gives life to everything and trieth the hearts and reins. Ah! the soul is sometimes entangled and ensnared by sins, like a bird in the net! We do not sometimes see any outlet from our sins, and they torment us; the heart sometimes feels terribly anxious and sorrowful on account of them; but "Jesus looks upon us," and streams of tears flow from our eyes, and with the tears all the tissue of evil in our soul vanishes; we weep and rejoice that such mercy has been suddenly and unexpectedly sent to us; what warmth we then feel in our heart, and what lightness, as though we could fly up to the Lord God Himself! I thank the Lord with all my heart for freely forgiving all my sin![2]

Indulgence of the flesh, hardened unfeelingness to everything spiritual, sacred, is the oppression of the enemy, although the carnal man does not consider it to be oppression, because he favours

[1] S. Luke xxii. 61 62 [2] Psalm ciii. 3.

it; but those who desire to live a spiritual life look upon it as oppression, because it does not admit God into their hearts, does not allow the grace of God to be poured into the heart, quickening and enlightening it, because such oppression makes the soul unfruitful for deeds of faith, hope, and love. At such times we become somehow carnal, as though having no spirit. Oh, how manifold are the various persecutions of the enemy! How truly we should grieve from the depths of our hearts at this hardened unfeelingness; how we should lament before the Lord: it will thus pass away, and the heart will be warmed and softened, and become capable of spiritual contemplation and holy feelings.

When you stand praying, burdened with many sins and overpowered with despair, begin to pray with hope, with a fervent spirit, and remind yourself that "the Spirit Itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered!"[1] When you remember with faith this action of the Spirit of God within us, then tears of emotion will flow from your eyes, you will feel in your soul peace, sweetness, justification, "and joy in the Holy Ghost,"[2] and you will cry in your heart, "Abba, Father!"

When you pray that your sins may be forgiven, strengthen yourself always by faith, and trust

[1] Rom. viii. 26. [2] Rom. xiv. 17.

in God's mercy, Who is ever ready to forgive our sins after sincere prayer, and fear lest despair should fall on your heart—that despair which declares itself by deep despondency and forced tears. What are your sins in comparison to God's mercy, whatever they be, if only you truly repent of them? But it often happens that when a man prays, he does not, in his heart, inwardly hope that his sins will be forgiven, counting them as though they were above God's mercy. Therefore, he certainly will not obtain forgiveness, even should he shed fountains of involuntary tears; and with a sorrowful, straitened heart he will depart from the gracious God, which is only what he deserves. "Believe that ye receive them," says the Lord, "and ye shall have them."[1] Not to be sure of receiving that for which you ask God is a blasphemy against God.

If you sin in any way before God (and we sin every day greatly), immediately say in your heart, with faith in the Lord, who hears the sobs of your heart, with the humble acknowledgment and feeling of your sins, the Psalm: "Have mercy upon me, O God, after Thy great goodness;"[2] and say the whole psalm heartily. If it does not take effect the first time, try again, only say it still more heartily, still more feelingly, and then salvation and peace of soul shall speedily shine upon you from the Lord. Thus be always contrite; this is the true proved

[1] S. Mark xi. 24. [2] Psalm li. 1.

remedy against sins. If still you do not obtain relief, blame yourself. It shows that you have prayed without contrition, without humility of heart, without a strong desire to obtain forgiveness of sins from God; it shows that you are not deeply grieved at your sin.

Some seem to be praying to the Lord, but are in reality serving the Devil, who nestles in their hearts, because they pray only with their lips, whilst their hearts are cold, do not feel, and do not desire that which the lips ask and say, and are "far from" [1] the Lord. Likewise, there are many communicants who communicate of the Body and Blood of Christ insincerely, not with great love, but only with their mouths and bellies, with little faith, coldly, with hearts attached to food, drink and money, or inclined to pride, malice, envy, slothfulness, and far from Him Who is all love, holiness, perfection, great wisdom, and unspeakable goodness. It is needful for such persons to go deeper into themselves, to repent more deeply, and think profoundly of what prayer is, and what Holy Communion is. Coldness of heart towards God, towards prayer, proceeds from the Devil, he is the coldness of hell; but let us, as children of God, love the Lord with burning love. Grant us this, our Lord, for without Thee "we can do nothing." [2] For Thou art—everything to us, whilst we ourselves are—nothing. Thou hast brought us from

[1] Isa. xxix. 13. [2] S. John xv. 5.

nonentity into being, and hast provided us with everything.

Fervent, tearful prayer not only cleanses from sins, but also cures bodily infirmities and maladies; it renews the whole of a man's being, and makes him, so to say, born again (I speak from experience). Oh, what a priceless gift prayer is! Glory to Thee, the Only-Begotten Son of God, Who hast obtained for us through Thy mediation the endless pardon of our sins! Glory to the All-Holy Spirit, Who "maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered,"[1] Who gives us ardent prayer with groanings and tears, Who warms our cold souls and gives contrition and sorrow for sins, cleansing, sanctifying, pacifying, strengthening, and renewing us! Glory to Thee, Holy Trinity, Which hast no beginning, Life-giving, eternally glorified by all reasonable creatures!

§ 6. Confession.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness —1 S. John i. 8, 9.

As soon as you have told the Lord your sins with a contrite heart, they melt away; as soon

[1] Rom. viii. 26.

as you have sighed and sorrowed for your sins, they are no more. "Tell thine iniquities, that thou mayest be justified." As they came, so they go away. They are an illusion. As soon as you have recognised that they are an illusion, an absurdity, a madness; as soon as you have formed the resolution to do righteously in the future, God cleanses you of them, through His minister and the Holy Mysteries.

Concerning penitence. Penitence should be sincere, perfectly free, and not in any way forced by any particular time and habit, or by the person before whom the sinner confesses. Otherwise it would not be true penitence. It is said: "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."[1] Is at hand—that is, it has come by itself. It is not necessary to seek for it long—it seeks us, our free inclination; that is, you yourself must repent with heartfelt contrition. "They were baptized of him" (is said of those baptized of John) "confessing their sins"[2]; that is, they themselves acknowledged their sins. And as our prayer consists principally of penitence and asking forgiveness of our sins, it must absolutely be always sincere and perfectly free, not against our will, not forced out of us by habit and custom. Such also should be our prayer when it is one of thanksgiving and praise. Gratitude supposes the soul of the man benefited to be full of free, lively feeling flowing freely

[1] S. Matt. iv. 17. [2] S. Matt. iii. 6.

from the mouth, "for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."[1] Praise, too, supposes an ecstasy of wonder in the man who contemplates the infinite goodness, wisdom, and omnipotence of God in the moral and material world, and therefore it ought also to be a perfectly free and intelligent action. In general, prayer should be a free and perfectly conscious outpouring of the man's heart before God, "I have poured out my soul before the Lord."[2]

Consciousness, memory, imagination, feeling, and will are helps to penitence. As we sin with all the powers of our soul, so penitence must be from our whole soul. Penitence in words only, without the intention of amendment and without the feeling of contrition, may be called hypocritical. Should the consciousness of sins be obscured, it must be cleared up; should the feeling be smothered and dulled, it must be roused; should the will become blunt and too weak for amendment, it must be forced; "the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force."[3] Confession must be sincere, deep and full.

The carnal man considers the Christian's freedom as slavery; for instance, attending Divine service, fasting, preparation for the

[1] S. Matt. xii. 34.

[2] Prayer of Hannah, the mother of Samuel (1 Sam. i. 15).

[3] S. Matt. xi. 12.

sacrament, confession, communion, all the sacraments, and does not know that all this is a requirement of his nature, a necessity for his spirit.

He, who is accustomed to give account of his life at confession here, will not fear to give an answer at the terrible judgment-seat of Christ. It is for this purpose that the mild tribunal of penitence was here instituted, in order that we, being cleansed and amended through penitence here below, may give an answer without shame at the terrible judgment-seat of Christ. This is the first motive for sincere confession, and, moreover, it must absolutely be made every year. The longer we remain without confessing, the worse it is for us, the more entangled we become in the bonds of sin, and therefore the more difficult it is to give an account. The second motive is tranquillity: the more sincere has been our confession, the more tranquil will the soul be afterwards. Sins are—secret serpents, gnawing at the heart of a man and all his being; they do not let him rest, they continually suck his heart; sins are—prickly thorns, constantly goring the soul; sins are—spiritual darkness. Those who repent must bring forth the fruits of repentance.

To what end do fasting and penitence lead? For what purpose is this trouble taken? They lead to the cleansing of the soul from sins, to peace of heart, to union with God; they fill us

with devotion and sonship, and give us boldness before God. There are, indeed, very important reasons for fasting and for confession from the whole heart. There shall be an inestimable reward given for conscientious labour. Have many of us the feeling of sonlike love to God? Dare many of us without condemnation and with boldness call upon the Father in Heaven and say: "Our Father!" . . . Is there not, on the contrary, no such sonlike voice to be heard in our hearts, which are deadened by the vanities of this world and attachments to its objects and pleasures? Is not our Heavenly Father far from our hearts? Is it not rather an avenging God that we should represent to ourselves, we who have withdrawn ourselves from Him into a far-away land? Yes, by our sins all of us are worthy of His righteous anger and punishment, and it is wonderful how long-suffering and forbearing He is to us—that He does not strike us like the barren fig-trees. Let us hasten to propitiate Him by repentance and tears. Let us enter into ourselves; let us consider our unclean hearts in all strictness, and when we see what a multitude of impurities are keeping them from the reach of Divine grace, we shall ourselves acknowledge that we are spiritually dead.

Bear the sufferings and painful smarts of the operation so that you may regain your health afterwards (this is said in reference to confession). It means that at confession you must

declare all your shameful deeds to your confessor, without concealment, though to do so may be painful, shameful, ignominious, and humiliating. Otherwise the wound will remain unhealed, will ache and be painful, will undermine your spiritual health, and remain as a leaven for other spiritual infirmities, or sinful habits and passions. A priest is a spiritual physician. Show him your wounds, without being ashamed, sincerely, openly, with son-like trust and confidence; for the confessor is your spiritual father, who should love you more than your own father and mother; for Christ's love is higher than any carnal, natural love. He must give an answer to God for you. Why has our life become so impure, so full of passions and sinful habits? Because a great many conceal their spiritual wounds and sores, owing to which they ache and become inflamed; and it is impossible to apply any remedy to them.

"If you fall, rise and you shall be saved." You are a sinner, you continually fall, learn also how to rise; be careful to acquire this wisdom. This is what the wisdom consists in: learning by heart the psalm, "Have mercy upon me, O God, after Thy great goodness," inspired by the Holy Ghost to the king and prophet David, and say it with sincere faith and trust, with a contrite and humble heart. After your sincere repentance, expressed in the words of King David, the forgiveness of your sins shall immediately shine upon

you from the Lord, and your spiritual powers will be at peace.

"He hath made Him to be sin for us, Who knew no sin," is said of Christ; "that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."[1] Will you be ashamed after this to acknowledge any of your sins, whatever they may be, or to take upon yourself the blame for sin which you have not committed? If the Son of God Himself was made guilty of sin, though He was sinless, then you, too, must accept blame for all sins with meekness and love (for you are really sinful of all sins), and accept blame humbly and submissively, even for those sins of which you are not guilty.

For the sake of our faith alone, the spiritual mountains—that is, the heights and burdens of sins—are removed. This is why, when Christians release themselves from the burden of their sins by repentance and confesssion, they sometimes say, "Thank God, a mountain has fallen off my shoulders!"

§ 7. Amendment of Life.

I will run the way of Thy commandments, when Thou hast set my heart at liberty.—Psalm cxix. 32.

What pleasure and joy you feel when you find some necessary and valuable object which was

[1] 2 Cor. v. 21.

lost! You are ready to leap with joy. Picture to yourself how pleasing to the Heavenly Father is the sight of His lost child, the sinner who is found; the sight of His lost sheep brought to life again; the sight of His lost and found piece of silver—that is, of the living image of God—man. It is impossible to describe this joy. The joy of the Heavenly Father over His lost and found prodigal son is so great that the whole loving and kind heaven is moved to joy. "Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth."[1] My lost brothers and sisters! return from the way of destruction to the Heavenly Father. "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."[2]

How good it is to conquer the passions! After the victory one feels such lightness of heart, such peace and greatness of spirit!

In this life we sin continually, and at the same time we are so self-loving that we cannot endure our faults and sins to be reproved, especially before others; but in the future life our transgressions will be reproved before the whole world. Remembering this terrible judgment-seat, let us bear reproof here humbly and gently, and let us correct ourselves of all our faults and sins; let us especially bear reproof from our superiors, and may the Lord teach them to reprove our faults, not maliciously, but lovingly, and in the spirit of meekness.

[1] S. Luke xv. 7. [2] S. Matt. iii. 2.

Bear in mind that for cleansing your heart from sins you will obtain an infinite reward—you will see God, your most gracious Creator, your Providence. The work of cleansing the heart is difficult, because it is connected with great privations and afflictions; and, therefore, the reward is great. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."[1]

How quick we are to evil and how slow to good! Now I desire to do good to my enemy, and to really show him kindness, but before I succeed in becoming kind in my heart, I am already evil, a fiery arrow of evil already inwardly burns me; I wish to be patient, but before I have strengthened my heart in patience, I become irritable, impatient; I wish to be humble, but Satan's pride has already found ample room in my heart; I wish to be gracious, meanwhile, when it is necessary to show graciousness, I show myself rough; I wish to be unmercenary and generous, but cupidity and avarice, upon the least occasion, like hungry and roaring lions, require to be fed; I wish to be simple, and trustful, but cunning and doubt already gnaw at my heart; I wish to be grave, concentrated, and reverent in my service to the Almighty, but light-mindedness and inattention of the heart prevent my becoming so; I wish to detach myself from earthly things, to be abstinent in food and drink, but when I see

[1] S. Matt. v.

pleasant food and drink and sit down to table, I, like a slave, am taken a willing captive by my belly, I easily allow myself to eat and drink more than my nature requires, greediness and intemperance again prevent and get the better of my desire to be indifferent to food and drink; thus I am like that impotent man who lay for thirty-eight years upon his bed, and came many times to the pool of Bethesda, which made whole whosoever first stepped in after the troubling of the water by an angel, but always another stepped down before him.[1] And when I, having become impotent through my sins, make an effort and come to myself, with the intention of immersing myself in God and of changing for the better, another steppeth into my heart before me, sin and the Devil forestall me in my own house, in my own pool of Bethesda, and do not allow me to reach the source of living waters, the Lord—do not allow me to immerse myself in the cleansing pool of faith, humility, heart-felt contrition and tears. Who will heal me then? Jesus Christ alone. When He sees my sincere and firm desire to be healed of my spiritual infirmity, when He hears my fervent prayer, then He will say to me: "Take up thy bed, and walk,"[2] and I shall rise from the bed of spiritual infirmity and walk; that is, by His grace I shall easily vanquish all my passions and fulfil every virtue.

My brothers and sisters who are zealous after

[1] S. John v. 7. [2] S. John v. 8.

piety! it may happen to you to hear, perhaps not seldom, and mostly from the members of your household, that you are a disagreeable, intolerable person. You will meet with serious dislike, enmity, on account of your piety, although those who are inimical to you would not acknowledge that their enmity is directed against you on account of your piety. Do not be disturbed at this, do not fall into despair; because the Devil can in reality exaggerate to an enormous extent some of your infirmities, from which you, being human, are not exempt; but remember the words of the Saviour: "A man's foes shall be they of his own household."[1] Correct yourself of your faults and hold fast to piety. Commit your conscience, your life, and deeds unto God, Who knows our hearts. However, look upon yourself impartially. Are you not indeed difficult in your character, especially to those of your household? Perhaps you are morose, unkind, unsociable, taciturn. Expand your heart for sociability and kindness, though not to over-indulgence and connivance; be gentle, not provoking, calm in reproof. "Let all your things be done with charity,"[2] said the Apostle. Be patient; do not find fault for everything. Bear some things, passing them by in silence and appear not to see them. "Charity beareth all things . . . endureth all things."[3] Sometimes through an impatient reproof enmity arises because the reproof was

[1] S. Matt. x. 36. [2] 1 Cor. xvi. 14.
[3] 1 Cor. xiii. 7.

not made in the spirit of meekness and love, but in the spirit of self-loving pretension to the submission of others.

Firmly purpose in your soul to hate every sin of thought, word, and deed, and when you are tempted to sin resist it valiantly and with a feeling of hatred for it; only beware lest your hatred should turn against the person of your brother who gave occasion for the sin. Hate the sin with all your heart, but pity your brother; instruct him, and pray for him to the Almighty, Who sees all of us and tries our hearts and innermost parts. "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin."[1] It is impossible not to often fall into sin unless you have a hatred of it implanted in your heart. Self-love must be eradicated. Every sin comes from the love of self. Sin always appears, or feigns, to wish us well, promising us plenteousness and ease. "The tree was good for food, and it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise."[2] This is how sin always appears to us.

[1] Heb. xii. 4. [2] Gen. iii. 6.

§ 8. Fasting.

Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to Me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning.—Joel ii. 12.

"Whosoever will save his life shall lose it"[1]—that is, whosoever wishes to save his old, carnal, sinful man, shall lose his life: for the true life consists in crucifying and mortifying the old man, together with his deeds, and putting on "the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him."[2] Without the mortification of the old, carnal man, there is no true life or eternal blessedness. The more complete and more poignant the mortification of the old man is, the more perfect will his renovation and regeneration be, the higher his cleansing the more perfect his life, and the greater his bliss in the future world. Mortify yourself, and you shall obtain new life. Ah! I myself feel that when I am in perfect health, and do not keep under my body by labours, I die in spirit, the Kingdom of God is no longer in me, and my flesh and the Devil overpower me.

It is necessary for a Christian to fast, in order to clear his mind, to rouse and develop his feelings, and to stimulate his will to useful activity. These three human capabilities we darken and

[1] S. Matt. xvi. 25. [2] Col. iii. 9, 10.

stifle above all by "surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life." [1] Through these we fall away from God, the source of life, and fall into corruption and vanity, perverting and defiling the image of God within us. Surfeiting and sensuality nail us to the earth, and cut off, so to say, the wings of the soul. But look how high was the flight of the souls of the ascetics and abstinent! They soared in the heavens like eagles; they, the earth-born, lived with their intellect and heart in heaven, and heard there unspeakable words, and learned there Divine wisdom. And how a man lowers himself by gluttony and drunkenness! He perverts his nature, created after the image of God, and becomes like unto the beasts, and even worse. Oh, woe unto us for our attachments, for our iniquitous habits! They hinder us from loving God and our neighbours, and from fulfilling God's commandments; they implant in us criminal, carnal self-love, the end of which is everlasting destruction. Thus the drunkard does not grudge money for the sake of gratifying his flesh and stupefying himself, while he grudges giving a few pence to the poor; the smoker flings away tens and hundreds of roubles, and grudges pence to the poor, which might save his soul; those who love to dress luxuriously, or are lovers of elegant furniture or china, spend enormous sums upon dress, furniture, and china, and pass by beggars coldly and contemptuously;

[1] S. Luke xxi. 34.

those who like to fare sumptuously do not grudge spending tens and hundreds of roubles for dinners, while they grudge a few coppers to the poor. It is also necessary for a Christian to fast, because, with the Incarnation of the Son of God, human nature became spiritualised and was made godly, and now we hasten towards the Kingdom of God, which is "not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."[1] "Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them."[2] To eat and drink—that is, to care for sensual pleasures—is only natural to heathenism, which, not knowing spiritual, heavenly delights, sets the whole life in the pleasures of the belly, in much eating and drinking. This is why in the Gospel the Lord so often reproves this destructive passion. Why, therefore, should we darken and stifle our souls and kill their spiritual powers?

In proportion as a man gratifies his sensuality, he becomes carnal, and drives away from himself the most Holy Spirit of God, Who cannot dwell in those who lead a carnal life. "What communion hath light with darkness?"[3] Such a state, worthy of tears, is experienced by very many; but, alas! they do not even recognise that they have not the Spirit of God in them—just the same as a man blind from birth is not

[1] Rom. xiv. 17. [2] 1 Cor. vi. 13.
[3] 2 Cor. vi. 14.

conscious of his great loss in not seeing the light. Such men have neither faith nor love in their hearts, nor the spirit of prayer, and they avoid communion with the Church. My God, how many dangers there are in life for me! When I gratify my flesh too much, I become my greatest enemy.

If you greedily eat and drink much, then you will be flesh; whilst if you fast and pray, then you will be spirit. "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit."[1] Fast and pray, and you shall accomplish great things. The satiated man is incapable of great works. Have simplicity of faith, and you shall accomplish great things; "for all things are possible to him that believeth."[2] Be watchful and zealous, and you shall do great things.

Fasting is a good teacher: (1) It soon makes everybody who fasts understand that a man requires very little food and drink, and that in general we are greedy and eat a great deal more than is necessary—that is, than our nature requires. (2) Fasting clearly shows or discloses all the infirmities of our soul, all its weaknesses, deficiencies, sins, and passions; just as when muddy, standing water is beginning to be cleaned it shows what reptiles and what sort of dirt it contains. (3) It shows us all the necessity of turning to God with the whole heart, and of

[1] Eph. v. 18. [2] S. Mark ix. 23.

seeking His mercy, help, and salvation. (4) Fasting shows all the craftiness, cunning, and malice of the bodiless spirits, whom we have hitherto unwittingly served, and whose cunning, now that we are enlightened by the light of God's grace, becomes clear, and who now maliciously persecute us for having left their ways.

Those who reject fasting forget from what the falling into sin of the first men proceeded (from intemperance), and what means against sin and temptation were indicated to us by the Saviour, when He Himself was tempted in the desert (He fasted forty days and nights); they do not know, or do not wish to know, that a man most frequently falls away from God through intemperance, as was the case with the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, and with Noah's contemporaries—for intemperance is the cause of every sin in men; those who reject fasting take away from themselves and from others the arms against their flesh, with its manifold passions, and against the Devil, both of which are especially powerful against us through our intemperance; therefore they are not soldiers of Christ, for they throw down their arms and give themselves up willingly as prisoners to their sensual and sin-loving flesh; lastly, they are blind and do not see the connection between the causes and the consequences of acts.

People say that it is not a matter of importance

if you eat meat during Lent, for Lent does not consist in food; that it is not a matter of importance if you wear costly, fine clothes, frequent theatres, evening parties, masquerades; if you provide yourself with expensive plate, china, furniture, costly equipages, spirited horses; if you amass and hoard money, etc. But what is it that turns away our heart from God, the source of life; through what do we lose eternal life? Is it not through gluttony, through expensive dress, like the rich man in the Gospel? Is it not through theatres and masquerades? What is it that makes us hard-hearted to the poor and even to our own relatives? Is it not our attachment to carnal pleasures in general, to our belly, to dress, plate, furniture, carriages, money, etc.? Can a man serve God and mammon;[1] be a friend ot God and a friend of the world, work for Christ and for the Devil? It is impossible. Through what did Adam and Eve lose Paradise, through what did they fall into sin and death? Was it not through food alone? Let us consider well what makes us careless about the salvation of our soul, which cost the Son of God so dear; what makes us add one sin to another; what makes us fall continually into opposition against God, into a life of vanity. Is it not attachment to earthly things, and especially to earthly delights? What makes our heart gross? What makes us become flesh, and not spirit, perverting our moral nature? Is

[1] S. Matt. vi. 24.

it not attachment to food and drink and other earthly goods? How after this can it be said that to eat meat during Lent is unimportant? To say so is nothing but pride, sophism disobedience, want of submission to God, and estrangement from Him.

Man is dear to the Lord, the whole world is obedient to him. The Son of God Himself came down from heaven on earth to save him from everlasting torments, to reconcile him with God. All fruits, the various flesh of animals, were given to him for food, and various drinks were given to him to please his taste—but not to excite his passions, not for his *only* enjoyment, for the Christian has great, spiritual, Divine enjoyments. Carnal delights must be always made subject to these higher ones; they must be restrained or completely suppressed when they hinder spiritual delights. This signifies that it is not to afflict man that food and drink are temporarily forbidden him by the Church, not to limit his freedom, as worldly people say, but it is done in order to afford him true, lasting, and eternal delights; therefore meat or flesh food, and wine and spirits, are forbidden (during Lent), specially by reason of the fact that man is very dear to God, and in order that his heart should cling to God alone, and not to anything perishable, unworthy of him. But man, perverted by sins, easily attaches himself to earthly pleasures, forgetting that his true enjoyment,

his true life, is the eternal God, and not the pleasant excitation of the flesh.

Do not have any partiality, not only, either for food and drink, for dress, for a spacious and richly decorated dwelling, for the luxurious furniture of your house, but not even for your health, do not even have the least partiality for your life, give up all your life to the Will of the Lord, saying: "for to me to live—is Christ, and to die—is gain."[1] "He that hateth his life in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal."[2] Attachment to the temporary life, to one's own health, leads to many deviations from God's commandments, to the indulgence of the flesh, to breaking the fasts, to evading the conscientious fulfilment of the duties connected with our service, to despondency, impatience, irritability. Never sleep before saying evening prayers, lest your heart should become gross from ill-timed sleep, and lest the enemy should hinder it by a stony insensibility during prayer. "Be sober, be vigilant."[3] "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."[4] "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."[5] "Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly

[1] Phil. i. 21.
[2] S. John xii. 25.
[3] 1 S. Peter v. 8.
[4] S. Matt. xxvi. 41.
[5] S. Matt. xxv. 13.

He find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all Watch." [1]

The root of every evil is a self-loving heart, or self-pity, self-sparing; it is from self-love, or from excessive and unlawful love for oneself, that all the passions proceed: coldness, insensibility, hard-heartedness towards God and our neighbour, wicked impatience or irritability, hatred, envy, avarice, despondency, pride, unbelief, incredulity, greediness after food and drink, or gluttony; the love of money, vanity, slothfulness, hypocrisy. Never pity yourself in anything, crucify yourself—your old man, nestling chiefly in the flesh—and you will strike at the root of all your passions. Bear patiently all that is unpleasant to your flesh; do not spare it, go against it, and you will become a true follower of the Christ. The whole wisdom of a Christian consists in his wisely going against his flesh in everything during his lifetime. "For I know that in me [that is, in my flesh] dwelleth no good thing," [2] says the Apostle.

The incorporeal enemy enters the heart of man through satiety and drunkenness—this can be felt by any one who is observant. This is the reason why, with the growth of drunkenness, the inclination to drunkenness increases so terribly (because the power of the enemy over the man increases) —this is why you notice in drunkards a power

[1] S. Mark xiii. 35-37. [2] Rom. vii. 18.

involuntarily drawing them to satisfy their passion or their inward craving for wine. The enemy is in the hearts of these unhappy people. How can the demon of drunkenness be driven out? By prayer and fasting. The enemy enters the hearts of men because they have given themselves up to a carnal mode of life—to gluttony, and because they do not pray. It is, therefore, natural that he can be driven out from them by opposite means—that is, by prayer and fasting.

Oh, how fearful it is to use food and drink for amusement, to eat and drink in excess! A full stomach makes a man lose faith and the fear of God, and makes him unfeeling in prayer, thanksgiving, and praise to God. A satiated heart turns away from the Lord, and becomes as hard and unfeeling as a stone. This is why the Saviour carefully warns us against surfeiting and drunkenness: "And so that day come upon you unawares," [1] because of the wrath of the Lord upon us for heedlessly and idly spending the time in eating and drinking.

In order to be perfectly pleasing to God, we must also for His sake be perfectly indifferent to our flesh; for instance, when, during prayer, notwithstanding our slothfulness and strong inclination to sleep, we force ourselves not to yield to it, then we are indifferent to our flesh. The martyrs and ascetics had this perfect indifference for their flesh.

[1] S. Luke, xxi. 34.

When you feel that there is no peace in your heart, through an undue partiality towards anything earthly and worldly, and that, besides this, the heart breathes irritability and malice, be immediately on your guard, and do not let your heart be filled with the devilish fire. Pray fervently, and strengthen by the power of God your passionate, impatient heart. Be firmly assured that the evil is kindled in your heart by the enemy; he chiefly assaults the heart through a full stomach. This is from experience.

Do not believe your flesh when it threatens you with weakness during prayer; it lies. As soon as you begin to pray you will find that the flesh will become your obedient slave. Your prayer will vivify it also. Always remember that the flesh is lying.

Begin to fulfil the commandments relating to small things, and you will come to fulfil the commandments relating to great things: small things everywhere lead to great ones. Begin by fulfilling the commandment of fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays, or the tenth commandment relating to evil thoughts and desires, and you will eventually learn to fulfil all the commandments. "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much."[1]

By feeding largely, one becomes a carnal man,

[1] S. Luke xvi. 10.

having soulless flesh and no spirit; while by fasting, one attracts the Holy Ghost and becomes spiritual. When cotton is not wetted with water it is light, and if in a small quantity flies up in the air; but if it is wetted, it becomes heavy and at once falls to the ground. It is the same with the soul. Oh, how important it is to preserve it by fasting!

The substance of the world is as nothing; everywhere and in all things is the life-giving Spirit of God higher than anything. When you pray to God, represent to yourself that matter is as though non-existent, and that all creatures are as though non-existent; but that God alone is omnipresent and one, having no determined place and limits, and filling, embracing, creating, and keeping all things. If you yourself are free from attachments to material things, and give yourself to prayer and fasting, then even in you the spirit will as it were swallow up the flesh, and you will become spiritual and will contemplate God the Spirit everywhere in nature; whilst, on the contrary, those who are attached to earthly things, especially to food and drink, to money, become "sensual, having not the Spirit."[2] And in everything they only see the flesh, not contemplating the spirit, and even rejecting the spiritual side of things.

To repent—means to feel in our hearts the

[1] Psalm xxxix. 6. [2] Jude i. 19.

falsehood, the madness, the guilt of our sins ; it means—to acknowledge that we have offended by them our Creator, our Lord, our Father and Benefactor, Who is infinitely holy, and infinitely abhors sin ; it means, to desire, with the whole soul, to amend and to expiate our sins.

Do not hasten to eat and drink, but rather hasten to perform God's service ; and when performing God's service, do not think of food and drink. Think well before Whom you stand, with Whom you are conversing, to Whom you are singing praises ; be wholly in God, belong wholly to Him alone, pray with all your heart, sing with all your heart, serve for your neighbour as you would serve for yourself, gladly, heartily, not with a divided heart and thoughts. Lord ! help us ; for without Thee we can do nothing. [1]

For what purpose does the Lord add day after day, year after year, to our existence ? In order that we may gradually put away, cast aside, evil from our souls, each one his own, and acquire blessed simplicity ; in order that we may become, for instance, gentle as lambs, simple as infants ; in order that we may learn not to have the least attachment to earthly things, but like loving, simple children, may cling with all our hearts to God alone, and love Him with all our hearts, all our souls, all our strength, and all our thoughts,

[1] S. John xv. 5.

and our neighbour as ourselves. Let us hasten, therefore, to pray to the Lord, fervently and tearfully, to grant us simplicity of heart, and let us strive by every means to cast out the evil from our souls—for instance, evil suspiciousness, malevolence, malignity, malice, pride, arrogance, boastfulness, scornfulness, impatience, despondency, despair, irascibility and irritability, fearfulness and faint-heartedness, envy, avarice, gluttony, and satiety; fornication, mental and of the heart, and actual fornication; the love of money, and in general the passion for acquisition; slothfulness, disobedience, and all the dark horde of sins. Lord, without Thee we can do nothing! Bless us Thyself in this work, and give us the victory over our enemies and our passions. So be it!

When hungry, do not throw yourself upon food—else you will overload your heart and body. Eat slowly, without avidity, with reflection to the glory of God, remembering the God Who feeds us, and above all His incorruptible food, His Body and Blood, that out of love He has given Himself to us in food and drink.

You must pay most strict and active attention to this your daily action of eating and drinking, for from food and drink, from their quality and quantity, your spiritual, social, and family activity very greatly depends: "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be over-charged

with surfeiting and drunkenness."[1] Tea and coffee also pertain to drunkenness if indulged in unseasonably and to excess. Oh, woe unto us who are full now, and frequently look neglectfully upon God's gifts!

Lord! as it is natural to the Prototype to attach, to assimilate to Itself Its images, to abide and to live in them, so, likewise, it ought to be natural to those who are created after Thine image to yearn with all their love, with all their ardour, after their Prototype, and to attach themselves to It. But our greedy, sensual flesh, gross and inert, withdraws us from Thee. Fasting and abstinence are necessary for us whilst we crave after sensual gratifications. Strengthen us in abstinence.

[1] S. Luke xxi. 34.

CHAPTER VI.

TEMPTATION AND VICTORY.

§. 1 The Tempter.

We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in the heavenly places.—Eph. vi. 12.

There is no doubt that in the hearts of many people the presence of the Devil manifests itself by a kind of spiritual languor, prostration, and slothfulness for every good and useful work, especially for works of faith and piety requiring attention and soberness of heart, and for spiritual work in general. Thus he strikes the heart with languor and the intellect with dulness during prayer, with coldness and indolence when it is necessary for us to do good—for instance, to have compassion upon those who suffer, to help those who are in need, to comfort those who are in sorrow, to teach the ignorant, to guide the erring and vicious into the way of

truth. We must constantly watch our heart, drive away from it the mists of slothfulness and hardened unfeelingness, and see that it should always burn with faith and love for God and our neighbour, and ever be ready for every kind of labour and self-sacrifice for the glory of God and the salvation of our neighbour. "Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord."[1] The Devil also manifests his presence in our hearts by unusually violent irritation. We sometimes become so sick with our own self-love that we cannot even endure the slightest contradiction, any spiritual or material obstacles; cannot bear a single rough, harsh word. But then is the very time for endurance when the waters of malice and impatience reach the depths of our souls. "In your patience possess ye your souls."[2] "The rain descended, and the floods came. . . upon that house."[3] What will become of it? What will become of the man himself when the Devil lets in upon him the floods of his temptations and blows upon him with the wind of his snares? If the Christian stands firmly upon the rock, Christ, then he will not fall; but if he stands upon the sand of his own sophistry and passions, then great will be his fall.[4]

The enemy acts destructively upon men's hearts, amongst other ways, through outward

[1] Rom. xii. 11.
[2] S. Luke xxi. 19.
[3] S. Matt. vii. 27.
[4] S. Matt. vii. 24-27.

nature, as upon Job—by means of winds, water and fire. Houses are sometimes burnt down through the wiles of the enemy; houses are submerged and vessels sunk; winds blow down and destroy buildings; or else in wet weather, through damp and gases, the enemy uses his craft upon our inward parts, oppressing us with heaviness, and striking us with an apathetic coldness to everything true and holy. Oh, how many and diverse are the wiles of the prince of the powers of the air, and how difficult it is sometimes to distinguish them!

The enemy daily and violently persecutes my faith, hope and love. Thou art persecuted, my faith! Thou art persecuted, my hope! Thou art persecuted, my love! Endure, faith; endure, hope; endure, love! Take courage, faith; take courage, hope; take courage, love! God is your Defender! Do not grow weak, faith; do not grow weak, hope; do not grow weak, love!

The evil spirit tries to scatter prayer as if it were a sandheap, tries to turn the words into dry sand, without coherency or moisture—that is to say, without fervour of heart. Thus prayer may become either a house built on sand or a house built on a rock. Those build on sand who pray without faith, absently, coldly; such prayer is scattered of itself, and does not bring any profit to him who prays; those build on a rock who, during the whole time of their prayer, have their

eyes fixed upon God, and pray to Him as to a living Person, conversing face to face with them.

The Devil generally enters into us through one single lying imagination, or through a single false thought and sinful desire of the flesh, and afterwards he works in us and disturbs us, so incomplex is he. Cannot, therefore, the Lord of all spirits enter into us through one single thought and through true and holy love, and abide with us, and be everything to us? And therefore pray undoubtingly; that is, simply, in the simplicity of your heart, without a doubt: it ought to be as easy to pray as to think.

When you are very young, or leading the life of the sinful world, then you only know by name both Christ the Saviour and the enemy of God and mankind, the most evil Satan, and you think that Christ is very far away from you in heaven, and that there is a Devil somewhere, but not in any way near and around you, and though you hear that he is evil, you think his wickedness does not concern you; but when you grow older and enter upon the devout life, when you serve God with a pure conscience, then you will experience in your heart the difference between the easy yoke of the Saviour and the heavy burden of Satan, who pitilessly injures us.

If you have not firm, unashamed faith in the most merciful and Almighty God, do not hasten

to pray to Him to grant you any blessing, otherwise the Devil will strike and wound you with incredulity or unbelief in the possibility of the fulfilment of your prayer, and you will go away from before the face of God ashamed, despondent, and gloomy. Do not be heedless, but first sit down, count in accordance with the Lord's words your spiritual estate, or measure your faith, "whether you have sufficient to finish it," lest the demons, seeing your want of calculation, begin to mock at you, saying: "This man began to build and was not able to finish."[1] Thus, before prayer, reckon the degree of your faith, and, having found it sufficient, lively, firm, and unashamed, "come boldly unto the throne of grace that" you "may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."[2]

Glory to Thee, Lord, our Father, most wise prover of my love for Thee and my neighbour! Do not leave me without the temptations which are necessary and beneficial in accordance with Thy wisdom and truth, not for a single day of my life. May they confirm, strengthen, and increase my love for Thee and my neighbour, and may I not appear poor and empty before Thy face at the day of Thy judgment!

[1] S. Luke xiv. 28-30. [2] Heb iv. 16.

§ 2. The Perils of Ease.

And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.—S. Luke xxi. 34.

Unfortunate is he who immoderately loves the comforts of life, and has surrounded himself with all possible comforts. He will shun every discomfort; he will become effeminate and unaccustomed to patience; whilst the life of the Christian is all discomfort, a narrow, rough way, a cross, requiring discomfort and great patience. And therefore, Christian wrestler, do not seek for all comforts in your dwelling and surroundings; do not love the comforts of this world, but love Christ, the cross-bearer. Endure discomfort, accustom yourself to discomforts: "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content,"[1] says the Apostle. Unfortunate is he who loves adornment and seeks the adornment of his body; he will not strive as he ought for the adornment of his soul by faith, love-meekness, humility, righteousness, patience. Especially unfortunate is he who seeks to be adorned with honours; he will make a shameful idol of himself, like Nebuchadnezzar; will be, come proud in his demeanour towards those who have not such honours, and will exact reverence not with "costly array."[2] Even we men, like

[1] Phil. iv. 11. [2] 1 Tim. ii. 9.

women, seek after adornment and adorn ourselves like idols, while we think but little of inward beauty, and even entirely forget the inward temple, or the tabernacle, of our soul. Unfortunate is he who loves haste; he will meet a multitude of obstacles, with thousands of unpleasantnesses and inward straitness, through his haste, and will have many occasions for irritation. Unfortunate is he who is passionately fond of eating and drinking, cares for surfeiting and enjoyments: he will indeed find, when he begins to labour for the Lord, that food and drink, if we set our heart upon them, are a heavy burden for the body, affliction and destruction for the spirit, and that man can be really satisfied with very, very little and simple food.

Here in this world of vanities, in this adulterous and sinful world, our souls and bodies are continually and often imperceptibly corrupted "by moth and rust, and thieves, [mental ones] which break through and steal"[1] the treasures of the soul; that is, "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."[2] What is, then, the true remedy against the continual sinful corruption of these mental thieves? The prayer of repentance and of faith. It revives and vivifies our souls, corrupted by seductive carnal desires, and drives away the mental thieves; it is a scourge for them, whilst for us it is the source of power, life, and salvation. Glory to God for this!

[1] S. Matt. vi. 19. [2] Rom. xiv. 17.

Prayer protects and delivers us from sin. It is good for us to live with the prayer of faith in our hearts, for during prayer we live with the Lord, Who has promised all good things to those who ask Him: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."[1] Glory to thee, Lord, for Thy most true words. Lord! grant to all those who ask of Thee, through my unworthy means, the various blessings, the petitions of their hearts. Amen—so be it!

The carnal man's entire life and occupations have a carnal tendency and carnal aim; his prayer is carnal, his learning and his teaching of others are carnal, his writings are carnal; at every step, in nearly every word, the carnal life appears. The carnal life manifests itself especially in everything relating to the man's appetites; here is the very seat of the carnal man. In proportion as the man by God's grace lays aside the carnal life, he begins to trample his carnal appetites under foot—he alters his food, ceases to live for insatiable appetite; gradually in his heart, faith, hope and love begin to reign. Instead of eating, drinking, dress, riches, God, the soul, eternal life, eternal torments, occupy his thoughts and imagination. Instead of the love of money, of food, drink, dress, the

[1] S. Matt. vii. 7, 8.

luxury of his house and surroundings, love for God, for men, a longing to dwell with the angels and saints; instead of food and drink, hunger and thirst, the diligent reading and listening to the Word of God and Divine service. Previously his enemies were those who hindered his outward well-being, now he bears privations with equanimity; previously he slept much and found pleasure in sleep, now he sleeps little and intentionally deprives himself of sweet sleep; previously he gratified the flesh in every way, now he mortifies it so that it may not rebel against the spirit.)

Our life is children's play, only not innocent, but sinful, because, with a strong mind, and with the knowledge of the purpose of our life, we neglect this purpose and occupy ourselves with frivolous, purposeless matters. And thus our life is childish, unpardonable play. We amuse ourselves with food and drink, gratifying ourselves by them, instead of only using them for the necessary nourishment of our body and the support of our bodily life. We amuse ourselves with dress, instead of only decently covering our body and protecting it from the injurious action of the elements. We amuse ourselves with silver and gold, admiring them in treasuries, or using them for objects of luxury and pleasure, instead of using them only for our real needs, and sharing our superfluity with those in want. We amuse ourselves with our houses and the

variety of furniture in them, decorating them richly and exquisitely, instead of merely having a secure and decent roof to protect us from the injurious action of the elements, and things necessary and suitable for domestic use. We amuse ourselves with our mental gifts, with our intellect, imagination, using them only to serve sin and the vanity of this world—that is, only to serve earthly and corruptible things—instead of using them before all and above all to serve God, to learn to know Him, the all-wise Creator of every creature, for prayer, supplication, petitions, thanksgiving and praise to Him, and to show mutual love and respect, and only partly to serve this world, which will some day entirely pass away. We amuse ourselves with our knowledge of worldly vanity, and to acquire this knowledge we waste most precious time, which was given to us for our preparation for eternity. We frequently amuse ourselves with our affairs and business, with our duties, fulfilling them heedlessly, carelessly, and wrongfully, and using them for our own covetous, earthly purposes. We amuse ourselves with beautiful human faces, or the fair, weaker sex, and often use them for the sport of our passions. We amuse ourselves with time, which ought to be wisely utilised for redeeming eternity, and not for games and various pleasures. Finally, we amuse ourselves with our own selves, making idols out of ourselves, before which we bow down, and before which we expect others to bow down. Who can suffi-

ciently describe and deplore our accursedness, our great, enormous vanity, the great misery into which we voluntarily throw ourselves? What answer shall we give to our immortal King, Christ our God, Who shall come again in the glory of His Father to judge both the quick and the dead, to declare the secret thoughts of all hearts, and receive from us our answer for every word and deed? Oh, woe, woe, woe to us who bear the name of Christ, but have none of the spirit of Christ in us; who bear the name of Christ, but do not follow the teaching of the Gospel! Woe to us who "neglect so great salvation"![1] Woe to us who love the present fleeting, deceptive life, and neglect the inheritance of the life that follows after the death of our corruptible body beyond this carnal veil!

If the carnal man is at ease and happy, the spiritual one feels oppressed; if the outward man flourishes, the inward one perishes. So opposite in us are the old, sinful, carnal man and the man renewed by Christ's grace; this is why the Apostle said, "Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day."[2] And we often experience this ourselves. Therefore the true Christian ought to long for outward, carnal, worldly sufferings, for they strengthen his spirit. He must not even think of murmuring. How can he murmur at that which is profitable to his immortal soul, although

[1] Heb. ii. 3. [2] 2 Cor. iv. 16.

the means by which this is attained are very repugnant to his carnal man? Illnesses, fires, robbery, poverty, misfortunes, wars, famine, often act beneficially upon the soul.

Our heart, full of passions, loves enjoyment and tranquillity, cannot endure bitterness and afflictions, and does not like any one to disturb us in any way; for instance, by a request to do something for him. But the Lord commanded us to renounce the sinful rest of the flesh, and to be the servants of all, and Himself showed us an example, for He knew no rest upon earth during His service for our salvation. The Apostles were also an example of this, especially the Apostle Paul.

When the flesh flourishes, the soul fades; when the flesh has full liberty, the soul is straitened; when the flesh is satiated, the soul hungers; when the flesh is adorned the soul is deformed; when the flesh overflows with laughter, the soul is surrounded by misfortune; when the flesh is in the light, the soul is in darkness—in the darkness of hell.

§ 3. Sickness and Poverty.

My son despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him, for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth; and scourgeth every son Whom He receiveth.—Heb. xii. 5.

Afflictions are a great teacher; afflictions show us our weaknesses, passions, and the need of repentance; afflictions cleanse the soul, they make it sober, as from drunkenness, they bring down grace into the soul, they soften the heart, they inspire us with a loathing for sin, and strengthen us in faith, hope, and virtue.

When your flesh suffers through maladies, remember that it is the greatest enemy of your salvation, that suffers, that is weakened by these sufferings, and bear them bravely in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Who for our sakes endured the cross and suffered death; also, remember that all our maladies are God's punishment for sins; they cleanse us, they reconcile us with God and lead us back to His love. Grant us "Thy peace," it is said, "and Thy love, as Thou hast granted us all things." Remember, that during your illness the Lord Himself is with you ("I am with him in trouble"[1]); that it has proceeded from a sign of the Master, punishing us as a father. You

[1] Psalm xci. 15.

who believe in the time of your welfare, see that you do not fall away from God in the time of misfortune, but, like the martyrs, be constant in faith, hope, and love.

You are ill, and your illness is very painful; you have become low-spirited and despondent; you are troubled and tossed with thoughts, each darker than the other; your heart and your lips are ready to murmur, to blaspheme God! My brother! listen to my sincere advice. Bear your illness bravely, and do not merely not despond, but on the contrary, rejoice, if you can, in your illness. You would ask me what there is for you to rejoice at when you are racked all over with pain? Rejoice that the Lord has sent you this temporary chastisement in order to cleanse your soul from sins. "For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth."[1] Rejoice in the fact that now you are not gratifying those passions which you would have gratified had you been in good health; rejoice that you are bearing the cross of sickness, and that therefore you are treading the narrow and sorrowful way leading to the kingdom of heaven. Maladies in our eyes only appear painful, unpleasant, and terrible. It is seldom that any one of us during the time of sickness represents to himself the profit which his illness brings to his soul; but in God's all wise and most merciful Providence, not a single malady remains without

[1] Heb. xii. 6.

some profit to our soul. Sicknesses in the hands of Providence are the same as bitter medicines for our soul, curing its passions, its bad habits and inclinations. Not a single malady sent to us shall return void. Therefore, we must keep in view the utility of sicknesses, in order that we may bear them more easily and more calmly. "He that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin,"[1] says the Holy Scripture.

In sickness and, in general, during bodily infirmity, as well as in affliction, a man cannot in the beginning burn with faith and love for God, because in affliction and sickness the heart aches, whilst faith and love require a sound heart, a calm heart. This is why we must not very much grieve if during sickness and affliction we cannot believe in God, love Him, and pray to Him fervently as we ought to. Everything has its proper time. There may be an unfavourable time, even for praying.

When, owing to sickness proceeding from various causes, you feel unwell and indisposed, and when in this condition your prayer is cold, heavy, filled with despondency and even despair, do not be disheartened or despairing, for the Lord knows your sick and painful condition. Struggle against your infirmity, pray as much as you have strength to, and the Lord will not despise the infirmity of your flesh and spirit.

[1] 1 Peter iv. 1.

"Make us glad according to the days wherein Thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil."[1] The merciful Lord, having punished us, forgives us afterwards by His temporal and eternal mercy. Sometimes a sick person suffers a long while from his malady, as from a wicked tyrant; but during this malady his soul is purified like gold; he obtains the freedom of God's children, and is deemed worthy of eternal peace and blessedness.

Our flesh becomes depressed and downcast when it is subjected to any infirmities; whilst when it is in good health and enjoys carnal pleasures, then it rejoices, leaps, and gets beyond itself. We must pay no attention to the delusive feelings of the flesh, and, in general, must disdain every carnal amusement and delight; we must bear with equanimity the afflictions and maladies of the flesh, take courage and set our trust upon God.

It is never so difficult to say from the heart, "Thy will be done, Father," as when we are in sore affliction or grievous sickness, and especially when we are subjected to the injustice of men, or the assaults and wiles of the enemy. It is also difficult to say from the heart, "Thy will be done," when we ourselves were the cause of some misfortune, for then we think that it is not God's will, but our own will, that has placed us

[1] Psalm xc. 15.

in such a position, although nothing can happen without the will of God. In general, it is difficult to sincerely believe that it is the will of God that we should suffer, when the heart knows both by faith and experience that God is our blessedness; and therefore it is difficult to say in misfortune, "Thy will be done." We think "Is it possible that this is the will of God? Why does God torment us? Why are others quiet and happy? What have we done? Will there be an end to our torments?" And so on. But when it is difficult for our corrupt nature to acknowledge the will of God over us, that will of God without which nothing happens, and to humbly submit to it, that is the very time for us to humbly submit to this will and to offer to the Lord our most precious sacrifice—that is, heartfelt devotion to Him, not only in the time of ease and happiness, but also in suffering and misfortune; it is then that we must submit our vain, erring wisdom to the perfect wisdom of God, for our thoughts are as far from the thoughts of God "as the heavens are higher than the earth."[1]

In times of rest, ease, and gratification of the flesh, the latter revives with all its passions and inclinations, whilst in times of oppression, vexation and weariness, it is subdued with all its passions; this is why, in His wisdom and mercy the Heavenly Father subjects our soul and body

[1] Isa. I. 8, 9.

to grievous afflictions and sicknesses, and this is why we must not only patiently endure these afflictions and sicknesses, but must rejoice in them, even more than in a state of spiritual calm, ease, and bodily health, for the spiritual condition of the man who is not subjected to spiritual afflictions or bodily sicknesses must undoubtedly be bad, especially during an abundance of earthly blessings; his heart imperceptibly generates all kinds of sins and passions, and exposes him to spiritual death.

In accordance with God's most wise order in this world, one thing precedes another, and one is changed into another: dishonour and honour, poverty and wealth, health and sickness. Before bestowing wealth upon any one, God often tries him by extreme poverty, depriving, on the other hand, the rich of everything; before honour by dishonour; and those raised to honour, by humiliation, so that we may learn to value God's gifts, and not be proud in our prosperity, knowing that it is the gift of the Master, undeserved by us.

The Devil is in the habit of attacking us when we are in straitened circumstances.

It is impossible not to wonder at the simple-heartedness and indifference to earthly blessings of the Galilean fishermen, and at their absolute obedience to the voice of the Lord. A few

words of the Saviour were enough; they left their nets, their sole wealth, their greatest treasure, and followed Him, without reasoning why and wherefore they went. What simplicity of heart! What detachment from earthly blessings! What childlike obedience! How easy is the access of the word of the Divine Messiah to simple hearts! It is spoken, and done! There are many such simple people living in labour and low estate, but there are no such men amongst the rich. What do we see in one of them when the Lord told him to sell his possessions and follow Him? He followed not the Lord, but his riches. "He went away," it is said, "sorrowful."[1]

God tries the various sinful attachments of our heart in different ways: one, the miserly, He tries by the loss of his money or his property, or a part of it, allowing thieves to steal, or brigands to rob him; another by fire, or inundation; another by useless expenditure through unsuccessful business affairs; another by illness, and expenses for medicines and doctors connected with the illness; another by the loss of wife, sister, or friend; another by dishonour. He tries all in different ways, in order to disclose to each the weak, diseased parts of his heart, and to teach each one to correct himself. In many, a sword shall pierce through their own soul that the thoughts of their hearts may be revealed.[2]

[1] S. Matt. xix. 22. [2] S Luke ii. 35.

Therefore, whatever loss may have occurred to your property, believe that it is the will of God, and say: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."[1]

§ 4. Desolation.

My God, my God, look upon me; why hast Thou forsaken me?—Psalm xxii. 1.

Sometimes in the lives of pious Christians there are hours when God seems to have entirely abandoned them—hours of the power of darkness; and then the man from the depth of his heart cries unto God: "Why hast Thou turned Thy face from me, Thou everlasting Light? For a strange darkness has covered me, the darkness of the accursed evil Satan, and has obscured all my soul. It is very grievous for the soul to be in his torturing darkness, which gives a presentiment of the torments and darkness of hell. Turn me, O Saviour, to the light of Thy commandments, and make straight my spiritual way, I fervently pray Thee."

Sometimes, just when we begin to delight in the Lord, the enemy immediately, either himself or through men, brings the greatest sorrow upon us. Such is the lot of those who are labouring in this life for the Lord. For instance, you have just received peace and joy in the cup of the

[1] Job i. 21.

Lord, and sometimes immediately after the service a fiery temptation assails you, and with it the affliction connected with it. Even at the very cup the enemy sets snares for you and disturbs you by various thoughts, against which you must fight, or else, knowing that you have wished for a long, long time to find rest in God, the enemy will not allow it. As long as the passions still work in us, as long as the old man lives and is not dead within us, until then much sorrow must befall us from various temptations in life, and from the struggles between the old man and the new.

During the life of the Christian there are hours of inconsolable sorrow and sickness, when it seems that the Lord has completely abandoned and forsaken him, for there is not the least feeling of God's presence in the soul. Such hours are the hours of the temptation of the faith, hope, love, and patience of the Christian. But better times shall soon come for him, "and He shall send Jesus Christ, Which before was preached unto you."[1] Soon the Lord will again rejoice him, so let him not fall under temptation.

Unite your soul to God by means of hearty faith and you will be able to accomplish everything. Do powerful, invisible, ever-watchful enemies wage war against you? You will conquer them. Are these enemies visible,

[1] Acts iii. 20.

outward? You will conquer them also. Do passions rend you? You will overcome them. Are you crushed with sorrows? You will get over them. Have you fallen into despondency? You will obtain courage. With faith you will be able to conquer everything, and even the Kingdom of Heaven will be yours. Faith is the greatest blessing of the earthly life; it unites the man to God, and makes him strong and victorious through Him. "He that is joined unto the Lord is one Spirit."[1]

If you do not yourself experience the action of the wiles of the evil spirit, you will not know, and will not appreciate and value as you ought, the benefits bestowed upon you by the Holy Spirit: not knowing the spirit that destroys, you will not know the Spirit that gives life. Only by means of direct contrasts of good and evil, of life and death, can we clearly know the one and the other. If you are not subjected to distresses, and danger of bodily or spiritual death, you will not truly know the Saviour, the Life-giver, Who delivers us from these distresses and from spiritual death. Jesus Christ is the consolation, the joy, the life, the peace, and the breadth of our hearts! Glory to God, the most wise and most gracious, that He allows the spirit of evil and death to tempt and torment us! Otherwise we should not have sufficiently appreciated and valued the comfort of grace, the

[1] 1 Cor. vi. 17.

comfort of the Holy Ghost the Comforter, the Life-giver!

When you are expecting powerful temptations from the enemy, arm yourself with all the armour of God, with faith, hope, and love. Keep in your heart the words, "All things are possible to him that believeth,"[1] and "Abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost."[2] Say: "I do not doubt in, and do not despair of, anything good, although you, mine enemy, endeavour to sow both doubt and despair in me in regard to everything good, and especially in regard to the highest good, love. The God of love Himself is with me, the God Whose children we all are. I, unworthy as I am, bear the image of this very Father." "Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me."[3]

Even the saints of God were at times seized with diabolical despair and despondency. What therefore, can we sinners expect? Oh, the enemy often wounds us by the wrath, humiliation, and cruel despondency of the heart! We must continually turn to God and be every moment with Him, in order that we may not be besieged with the wrath and despondency of the enemy. There are other means besides of escaping from them—the broad way of the world; only if you give yourself up to worldly

[1] S. Mark ix. 23. [2] Rom. xv. 13.
[3] S. John xvii. 6-9.

pleasures, despondency will leave you for a time, at least while the pleasures last. But afterwards you will be captivated by these pleasures; they will become a necessity to you, and you will find comfort and joy in them, and in them alone; but may God preserve every Christian from finding his only way of escape from the despondency of the Devil through such means! It is better to walk in the narrow path, to patiently bear despondency, and to seek frequent help and deliverance from the Lord Jesus Christ, Who always rejoices those labouring for their salvation for His sake, than to enter on the broad and smooth way of the world and purchase there, by means of the pleasures of the flesh, freedom from the spirit of despondency. By means of this spirit of despondency the enemy has driven many from the narrow path of salvation on to the broad, smooth path which leads to destruction.

Never despair of God's mercy, by whatever sins you may have been bound by the temptation of the Devil, but pray with your whole heart, with the hope of forgiveness; knock at the door of God's mercy and it shall be opened unto you. I, a simple priest, am an example for you: however I may sometimes sin by the action of the Devil, for instance, by enmity towards a brother, whatever the cause may be, even though it may be a right cause, and I myself become thoroughly disturbed and set my brother against me, and

unworthily celebrate the Holy Sacrament, not from wilful neglect, but by being myself unprepared, and by the action of the Devil; yet, after repentance, the Lord forgives all and everything, especially after the worthy communion of the Holy Sacrament: I become as snow, or as a wave of the sea, by the blood of Christ; the most heavenly peace dwells in my heart; it becomes light, so light, and I feel beatified. Then, indeed, I forget all troubles, anxieties, and the oppression of the enemy, I become entirely renewed, and as though risen from the dead. Do not then despair, brethren, whatever sins you may have committed, only repent and confess them with a contrite heart and humble spirit. Glory, O Lord, to Thy mercy! Glory, O Lord, to Thy long-suffering and forbearance!

Unwillingly, faint-heartedly, with murmurings and blasphemy against the Lord, we bear the cruel afflictions of our heart, not seeing the profit which should be derived from patiently and submissively bearing them. We did not wish to see that our heart has waxed gross and has become infected by various passions; that it is proud, adulterous, malicious, and cunning, and cleaves to earthly things; and that it cannot be cleansed and made humble, and become good and submissive to God otherwise than by cruel fiery afflictions and great oppression.

Do not despond in the time of violent temptation, afflictions, or sicknesses, or at obstacles arising from the disturbance of the enemy; all this is the reproof and chastisement of the righteous Lord, Who trieth the hearts and reins, for your cleansing, arousing, and correction, for burning out the thorns of carnal passions. And therefore do not complain if you sometimes suffer greatly. Do not think of the suffering, but of the blessed consequences of this chastisement, and the health of the soul. What would you not do for the health of your body? Still more must you bear everything for the health and salvation of your soul, which has eternal life.

What spiritual storms, hurricanes, fearful, fiery, sudden whirlwinds, often occur in the life of man, in the life of those who endeavour to lead a Christian life, and to serve God by prayer, interceding for themselves and others before His unspeakable mercy! It is only by God's mercy that the bark in which our soul travels over life's sea towards the eternity awaiting it, is not entirely wrecked and lost!

We must trust in God in all temptations, in all desolate conditions of the soul. The Lord will deliver.

When your heart inclines to evil, and the evil one begins to undermine your heart, so that

it is completely removed from the rock of faith, then say to yourself inwardly: "I know of my spiritual poverty, my own nothingness without faith. I am so weak, that it is only by Christ's name that I live and obtain peace, and I rejoice and my heart expands, whilst without Him I am spiritually dead, I am troubled, and my heart is oppressed; without the Lord's Cross I should have been long since the victim of the most cruel distress and despair. Only Christ keeps me alive: and the Cross is my peace and my consolation."

O Lord! Deprive me not of Thy heavenly gifts, for Thou art the Lord and canst do so if Thou willest; O Lord, save me from eternal torments, for Thou art the Lord and canst also easily do so if Thou willest; O Lord, be it in mind, or thought, in word or deed that I have sinned, forgive me, seeing the infirmity of my soul. Thus, Lord, Thou canst do all things for me, repentant and asking Thy blessings.

§ 5. The Spiritual Combat.

I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air.—1 Cor. ix. 26.

Those who are trying to lead a spiritual life have to carry on a most skilful and difficult warfare, through their thoughts every moment of their life—that is, a spiritual warfare; it is

necessary that our whole soul should have every moment a clear eye, able to watch and notice the thoughts entering our heart from the evil one and repel them; the hearts of such men should be always burning with faith, humility, and love; otherwise the subtilty of the Devil finds an easy access to them, followed by a diminution of faith, or entire belief, and then by every possible evil, which it will be difficult to wash away even by tears. Do not, therefore, allow your heart to be cold, especially during prayer, and avoid in every way cold indifference. Very often it happens that prayer is on the lips, but in the heart cunning, incredulity, or unbelief, so that by the lips the man seems near to God, whilst in his heart he is far from Him. And, during our prayers, the evil one makes use of every means to chill our hearts and fill them with deceit in a most imperceptible manner to us. Pray and fortify yourself, fortify your heart.

In order not to be in daily bondage to the passions and the Devil, you must set yourself an object to aim at. Have this object constantly in view, and endeavour to attain it, conquering all obstacles by the name of the Lord. What is this object? The Kingdom of God, the Divine palace of glory, prepared for believers from the creation of the world. But as this object can only be attained by certain means, it also is necessary to have such means at one's disposal. And what are these means? Faith, hope, and

love—especially the last. Believe, hope, and love, especially love, disregarding all obstacles; love God above everything and your neighbour as yourself. If you have not sufficient strength to preserve in your heart these inestimable treasures, fall down oftener at the feet of the God of Love. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you,"[1]—for He Who has promised is true. Walking, sitting, lying down, conversing, or working, at every time, pray with your whole heart that faith and love may be given to you. You have not yet asked for them as you should ask—fervently and instantly, with the firm purpose of obtaining them. Say now, "I will begin to do so henceforth."

Strive to do everything in opposition to that which the bodiless enemy wishes you to do. He incites you to pride, to self-glorification, and to judging your brother—you must humble yourself to the ground and ashes, judge yourself as severely as possible, and praise your brother in your heart. Should your brother, through the action of the enemy, behave proudly and maliciously to you, you must behave humbly and lovingly to him. If the enemy incites you to avarice—be generous with goodwill. Act thus in all similar circumstances, and you will obtain great grace from God, and will see this yourself with your spiritual eyes. If you have not inward

[1] S. Matt. vii. 7, 8.

strength to do so, the enemy being, as you say, very powerful, then ask it in prayer, at every time and every hour, of the Almighty, and He will help you.

We must mortify our body with its many passions, or our carnal passions, through abstinence, labour, prayer ; and not animate it and its passions through dainties, satiety, and slothfulness.

During prayer, do not allow the flesh and the enemy, acting through it, to conquer you; speak the truth from your heart, and use no deceit in your tongue.[1] Think and feel what you say in the prayer, and do not let there be honey on your tongue and ice in your heart. Once you are conquered by the enemy, you will have to defend yourself and your freedom against him, as a piece of ground already conquered by the enemy, and your heart will withdraw itself from the Lord. Do not neglect anything in the spiritual life; do not consider anything unimportant, unworthy of great attention: it is through little sins that the Devil leads us to great ones. Above all, endeavour to be always truthful in your heart. When it is most difficult to fight against the flesh, then is the time to show your firmness, then is the time not to grow weak in the conflict, but to fight like a good soldier of Christ.

[1] Psalm xv. 2, 3.

Do not be despondent when fighting against the incorporeal enemy, but even in the midst of your afflictions and oppression praise the Lord, Who has found you worthy to suffer for Him, by struggling against the subtilty of the serpent, and to be wounded for Him at every hour; for had you not lived piously, and endeavoured to become united to God, the enemy would not have attacked and tormented you.

Should thoughts of self-praise, of self-satisfaction, occur to you, say: "I myself am nothing; all that is good in me is accomplished by the grace of God." "What hast thou that thou didst not receive?"[1] "Without Me ye can do nothing."[2] Should the thought of despising any of your neighbours, or of your family occur to you, say: "The entire man is the beautiful work of God's hands; everything in him is very well ordered." For "it was very good."[3]

When your heart is struck by avarice, say to yourself: "My life is Christ, the Beloved of all. He is my inexhaustible wealth, my inexhaustible food, my inexhaustible drink. Our blind flesh dreams of finding life in food and in money, and bears ill-will against those who deprive it of these material means of life. But be firmly persuaded that your life is not money and food, but mutual love for the sake of love

[1] 1 Cor. iv. 7. [2] S. John xv. 5.
[3] Gen. i. 31.

for God. Remember that God is Love, uniting all things animated, by the laws of love, and bringing forth life from the union of love.

Do not fear the conflict, and do not flee from it: where there is no struggle, there is no virtue; where there are no temptations for faithfulness and love, it is uncertain whether there is really any faithfulness and love for the Lord. Our faith, trust, and love are proved and revealed in adversities, that is, in difficult and grievous outward and inward circumstances, during sickness, sorrow, and privations.

Christian! remember that Christ, the Founder of your faith, was crucified on the cross, and left you the cross. Why, then, do you live in luxury, in grandeur, in indulgence, in idleness? He suffered dishonour, and commanded you not to shun dishonour for His name; but you seek honour. Gaze more often upon the Crucified and learn your duties. "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."[1]

Do not believe your flesh when it grows weak and refuses to serve you, on the pretence of not being sufficiently strengthened by food. This is a delusion. Overcome it; pray fervently, and you will see that the weakness of your body was false, imaginary, not real: you will see in

[1] Gal. v. 24.

truth that "men shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."[1] Do not put your trust in bread.

The crucified flesh reconciles itself with the spirit and with God; whilst the flesh that is cherished, that is abundantly and daintily fed, fights hard against the spirit and against God, and becomes wholly an abomination of sin. It does not want to pray, and, in general, rebels against God by blasphemy, for instance, and estranges itself from God. This is from experience. Therefore, "they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lust."[2]

We must not be exasperated, angry, and proud, as is habitual to our corrupt nature, against those who are angry, envious, or proud towards us, but we must pity them as overcome by the flames of hell, and by spiritual death; we must pray to God for them from the depths of our hearts, that the Lord may take away the darkness from their souls and enlighten their hearts by the light of His grace. We are darkened by our own passions, and do not see the foolishness, the monstrousness of them, and of our conduct; but when the Lord enlightens us by the light of His grace, then we, awaking as from a sleep, clearly

[1] S. Matt. iv. 4. [2] Gal. v. 34.

perceive the monstrousness, the foolishness of our thoughts, feelings, words, and actions; our heart, which was hardened until then, softens; the evil passes away and is replaced by mercy, kindness, and indulgence. Therefore, in accordance with our Saviour's words, we must also love our enemies: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you,"[1] for they, our brethren, are also blind, have also gone astray.

How and when are we to care for the imperishable raiment of the soul, meekness, righteousness, chastity, patience, mercy, when all our care, attention, and means are directed to perishable raiment and the adornment of our body? We cannot serve two masters: for the soul is simple and single. How and when are we to care for the spiritual riches of good works, when we are only greedy after perishable riches and strive to amass it with all our might and means, when our heart clings to money, to the world, and not to God? How and when are we to care for the incorruptible spiritual food and for the blessed drink—for prayer, the reading of God's word, the writings and lives of the Holy Fathers, the Communion of the Body and Blood of the Lord, when we hardly let food and drink out of our mouths, and this stupefying lit-up poisonous smoke which many consider

[1] S Matt. v. 44.

so pleasant? How can our soul rejoice in the Holy Ghost, when we are continually occupied by earthly, vain pastimes and pleasures? O ruinous service to corruption, drawing us away from the life incorruptible, true and eternal!

Do not suffer, Lord, that even for an instant I may do the will of Thine and mine enemy—the Devil; but grant that I may continually do Thy will, alone the will of my God and my King: Thou alone, my true King by Whom all kings reign, grant that I may ever obey Thee, reverence Thee truly and firmly. "O come let us worship, and fall down and kneel before the Lord our Maker"; "serve the Lord in fear and rejoice unto Him with reverence."[1]

§ 6. The Triumph of Grace.

My grace is sufficient for thee.—2 Cor. xii. 9.

The meaning of grace. What is grace? It is the blessed power of God, given to the man who believes and who was baptised in the Name of Jesus Christ, or in that of the Holy Trinity—the power that cleanses, sanctifies, enlightens, that helps in doing good and withdraws from evil, that comforts and gives courage in misfortunes, sorrows and sickness, that is a pledge of receiving the everlasting blessings prepared by God in heaven for His chosen ones. Has a proud, selfish, malicious, envious person

[1] Psalm xcv. 6, ii. 11.

become meek, humble, and self-denying for the sake of the glory of God and the good of his neighbour, benevolent towards all, indulgent, yielding, sincere? He has become so by the power of grace. Has an unbeliever become a believing and zealous fulfiller of the precepts of religion? He has become so by the power of grace. Has a money-loving, covetous, unjust man, hard-hearted to the poor, changed in the depths of his soul, and become unmercenary, just, generous, compassionate? He owes it to the power of the grace of Christ. Has a glutton, a great eater and drinker, become abstinent, temperate, not through illness or any consciousness of the harmfulness of intemperance to the body, but from the consciousness of a moral, higher purpose? He has become so by the power of grace. Has any one that was previously full of hatred, rancour, and revenge suddenly become benevolent, loving even his enemies, his ill-wishers and revilers, not remembering any offences? He has become so by the regenerating, changing, and renewing power of grace. Has any one that was formerly cold towards God, towards the temple, the Divine service, to prayer, and in general to the Sacraments of religion, which cleanse and strengthen our souls and bodies, suddenly changed in his soul, and become fervent toward God, to Divine service and prayer, reverent towards the Sacraments? He has become so by the action of the saving grace of God. From this it is evident that many live

without grace, not recognising its importance and indispensability, and do not seek it, although the word of the Lord, says: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness."[1] Many live in plenty and ease, enjoy blooming health, eat with pleasure, drink, walk, amuse themselves, write or work in the various branches of human activity, but they have not the grace of God in their hearts, that priceless treasure of the Christian, without which no one can be a true Christian and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.

You cannot conquer any passion, any sin, without gracious help; therefore, always ask the help of Christ, your Saviour. It was for this that He came into the world, for this that He suffered, died, and rose from the dead, in order to help us in everything, to save us from sin, and from the violence of the passions, to cleanse us from our sins, to bestow upon us power in the Holy Ghost to do good works, to enlighten us, to strengthen us, to give us peace. You ask how you can save yourself when sin stands at every step, and you sin at every moment? There is a simple answer to this: at every step, at every moment, call upon the Saviour, remember the Saviour, and you will save yourself and others.

Wonderful is the power of faith! Only the lively thought of God—only heartfelt faith in

[1] S. Matt. vi. 33.

Him—is required, and He is with me; only hearty repentance for sins, with faith in Him, is required, and He is with me; one good thought, and He is with me; a pious feeling, and He is with me. But the Devil enters into me through impure, evil, blasphemous thoughts, through doubt, fear, pride, irritability, malice, avarice, envy; therefore his power over me entirely depends upon myself; if only I keep watch over myself, and continually preserve in my mind the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, with faith and love, he will be powerless to do me any harm.

My daily greatest misfortune is my sins, wounding and gnawing at my heart. But against this misfortune there is also a daily greatest Deliverer and Saviour, Jesus Christ. He daily benefits me, invisibly, bountifully. Poor sinners! Learn to know this Saviour as I know Him, by His grace, by His gifts.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PURSUIT OF HOLINESS.

§ 1. The Ordering of the Daily Life.

Order my steps in Thy word: and so shall no wickedness have dominion over me.—Psalm cxix. 133.

The only means by which you can spend the day in perfect holiness, and peace, and without sin, is the most sincere, fervent prayer as soon as you rise from sleep in the morning. It will bring Christ into your heart, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, and will thus strengthen and fortify your soul against any evil; but still it will be necessary for you carefully to guard your heart.

It is good, very good indeed, to be virtuous; the virtuous man is at peace himself, is pleasing to God and agreeable to other people. The virtuous man involuntarily attracts every one's attention. Why is it so? Because fragrance involuntarily attracts attention and makes every one wish to breathe it. Look upon the very

appearance of the virtuous man, upon his countenance. What sort of a countenance is it? It is the face of an angel. Meekness and humility overspread it, and involuntarily captivate every one by their beauty. Pay attention to his speech; from it there comes still greater fragrance: here you are as if face to face with his soul, and are enraptured with his sweet converse.

When God is present in all a man's thoughts, desires, intentions, words, and works, then it means that the kingdom of God has come to him; then he sees God in every thing—in the world of thought, in the world of action, and in the material world; then the omnipresence of God is most clearly revealed to him, and a genuine fear of God dwells in his heart: he seeks every moment to please God, and fears every moment lest he may sin against God, present at his right hand. "Thy kingdom come!"

Strive by every means constantly to rejoice the Heavenly Father by your life; that is, by your meekness, humility, gentleness, obedience, abstinence, right judgment, love of peace, patience, mercy, sincere friendship with worthy people, kindness to everybody, cordial hospitality, universal benevolence, accuracy in business, simplicity of heart and character, and by the purity of all your thoughts. Teach and strengthen us, O

God, to live in accordance with Thy Will, for Thou art our Father, and we are Thy children, in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Life is a great experimental science. Nothing is more difficult than to pass through this science, this narrow way, and these narrow gates. And those who have not learned, either through their mother's teaching or at school, to have faith in God and the fear of God, and to lead a pious life—those will find it especially difficult to study in the school of life. Often he who was found clever and learned in the school of sciences, who was greatly esteemed for his abilities, shows himself to be ignorant in the school of life; and, not only this, sometimes useless for anything, either for family life, by reason of his intractable character and his ungovernable heart, or for social activity. He is in distress, and not infrequently suffers shipwreck in life, like a vessel loaded with a heavy cargo, and allowed to put to sea during a storm without rudder, sails, and rigging.

Do everything in opposition to that which the enemy suggests to you. He suggests to you to hate those who offend you; you must love them; bless those who curse you, and do not torment those who take away your property, but give it away willingly. When you want to laugh, weep; when you feel despondent, endeavour to be glad; when you feel envious,

rejoice at the prosperity of others; when you are inclined to contradiction and disobedience, immediately submit and agree; when impure thoughts occur to you, be zealous of the purity of your heart, represent to yourself the high destiny of a Christian, made godly in Christ Jesus, and remember that our members are the members of Christ; when you feel proud, humble yourself; when spiteful, be specially kind; when irritable, preserve calmness; when avaricious, be generous; when distracted, immediately close your feelings to all outward things, and meditate on the "one thing needful"; when you feel doubt, little faith, unbelief, then especially call firm faith to your help, remind yourself of the examples of faith, or of believers in the Old and New Testaments, as well as the miracles accomplished by faith, and so on. Do thus, and do not succumb to the enemy; for all passions, partialities, and fancies are of his imagination.

In everything, and at every time, strive to please God and think of the salvation of your soul from sin and from the Devil, and of its adoption by God. On rising from your bed, make the sign of the cross and say: "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost," and also: "Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this day without sin and teach us to do Thy Will."[1] While washing, either at home or at the baths, say:

[1] From the Greek Doxology at Matins.

"Purge me with hyssop," Lord, "and I shall be clean; wash me and I shall be whiter than snow."[1] When putting on your linen, think of the cleanliness of the heart, and ask the Lord for a clean heart: "Create in me a clean heart, O God!"[2] If you have made new clothes and are putting them on, think of the renewal of the spirit and say: "Renew a right spirit within me."[3] Laying aside old clothes, and disdaining them, think with still greater disdain of laying aside the old man, the sinful, passionate, carnal man. Tasting the sweetness of bread, think of the true Bread, which gives eternal life to the soul, the Body and Blood of Christ, and hunger after this bread—that is, long to communicate of it oftener. Drinking water, tea, sweet-tasted mead, or any other drink, think of the true drink that quenches the thirst of the soul inflamed by passions—of the most pure and life-giving Blood of the Saviour. Resting during the day, think of the eternal rest, prepared for those who wrestle and struggle against sin, against the subcelestial spirits of evil, against human injustice or rudeness and ignorance. Lying down to sleep at night, think of the sleep of death, which sooner or later will unfailingly come to all of us, of that dark, eternal, terrible, night, into which all impenitent sinners will be cast. Meeting the day, think of the nightless day, eternal, most bright—brighter than the sunniest earthly day—the day

[1] Psalm li. 7. [2] Psalm li. 10. [3] *Ibid.*

of the Kingdom of Heaven, at which all those will rejoice who have striven to please God, or who have repented before God from their whole heart during this temporary life. When you are going anywhere, think of the righteousness of spiritually walking before God and say: "Order my steps in Thy word and let not any iniquity have dominion over me."[1] When doing anything, strive to do it with the thought of God, the Creator, Who has made everything by His infinite wisdom, grace, and omnipotence, and has created you after His image and likeness. When you receive or have any money or treasure, think that our inexhaustible treasury, from which we derive all the treasures of our soul and body, the ever-flowing source of every blessing, is God; thank Him with all your soul and do not shut up your treasures within yourself, lest you shut the entrance of your heart to the priceless and living treasure—God, but distribute part of your property amongst those who are in want, to the needy, to your poor brethren, who are left in this life, so that you may prove upon them your love, your gratitude to God, and be rewarded for this by God in eternity. When you see the white glitter of silver, do not be allured by it, but think that your soul should be white and should shine with Christ's virtues. When you see the glitter of gold, do not be allured by it, but remember that your soul ought to be purified as gold is, by fire,

[1] Psalm cxix. 133.

and that the Lord desires to make you yourself shine like the sun, in the eternal, bright kingdom of His Father, that you will see the Sun of Righteousness—God, the Trinity, the most holy Virgin, the Mother of God, and all the heavenly powers and Saints, filled with ineffable light and shining with the light poured upon them.

"Thy will be done." For instance, when you wish and by every means endeavour to be well and healthy, and yet remain ill, then say: "Thy will be done." When you undertake something and your undertaking does not succeed, say: "Thy will be done." When you do good to others, and they repay you by evil, say: "Thy will be done." Or when you would like to sleep and are overtaken by sleeplessness, say: "Thy will be done." In general, do not become irritated when anything is not done in accordance with your will, but learn to submit in everything to the will of the Heavenly Father. You would like not to experience any temptations, and yet the enemy daily harasses you by them; provokes and annoys you by every means. Do not become irritated and angered, but say: "Thy will be done."

Both the spiritual and bodily powers of a man increase and become perfected and strengthened by their exercise. By exercising your hand in writing, sewing, or knitting, you will accustom it to such work; by frequently exercising yourself in composition you will learn to write easily and

well; by exercising yourself in doing good works or in conquering your passions and temptations, you will in time learn to do good works easily and with delight: and with the help of God's all-active grace you will easily learn to conquer your passions. But if you cease writing, sewing, knitting, or if you only do so seldom, you will write, sew, and knit badly. If you do not exercise yourself in composition, or do so very seldom, if you live in the material cares of life only, it will probably become difficult for you to connect a few words together, especially upon spiritual subjects, the work set you will seem to you like an Egyptian labour. If you cease praying, or pray seldom, prayer will be oppressive to you. If you do not fight against your passions, or only do so seldom and feebly, you will find it very difficult to fight against them, you will often be conquered by them; they will give you no rest, and your life will be poisoned by them, if you do not learn how to conquer these evil, inward enemies, that settle in your heart. Therefore labour and activity are indispensable for all. Life without activity is not life, but something monstrous—a sort of phantom of life. This is why it is the duty of every man to fight continually and persistently against the slothfulness of the flesh. God preserve every Christian from indulging it! "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."[1] "Unto every one that hath

[1] Gal. v. 24.

shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath."[1]

There is no need to ask any one whether we ought to spread or propagate the Glory of God, either by writing, or by word, or by good works. This we are obliged to do according to our power and possibility. We must make use of our talents. If you think much about such a simple matter, then, perhaps, the Devil may suggest to you such foolishness as that you need only be inwardly active.

Do not only do your work when you wish to, but do it then, especially, when you do not wish to. Understand that this applies to every ordinary worldly matter, as likewise and especially to the work of the salvation of your soul—to prayer, to reading God's word and other salutary books, to attending Divine service, to doing good works, whatever they may be, to preaching God's word. Do not obey the slothful, deceitful, and most sinful flesh; it is eternally ready to rest, and to lead us into everlasting destruction through temporal tranquillity and enjoyment. "In the sweat of thy face," it is said, "shalt thou eat bread."[2] O miserable soul, "carefully cultivate the talent granted unto thee,"[3] sings the Church. "The kingdom of

[1] S. Matt, xxv. 29. [2] Gen. iii. 19.
[3] Condakion at Matins on Holy Tuesday.

heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force,"[1] says our Lord and Saviour.

In all your works, either at home or at the place of your service, do not forget that all your strength, your light, and your success are in Christ and His Cross; therefore, do not fail to call upon the Lord before beginning any work, saying: Jesus, help me! Jesus, enlighten me! Thus your heart will be supported and warmed by lively faith and hope in Christ, for His is the power and glory unto ages of ages.

Be moderate in all religious works, for moderation, even in virtue, correspondingly to your powers, according to circumstances of time, place, and preceding labour, is prudent and wise. It is well, for instance, to pray with a pure heart, but as soon as there is no correspondence between the prayer and your powers (energy), with the various circumstances of place and time, with your preceding labours, then it ceases to be a virtue. Therefore the apostle Peter says, "Add to virtue knowledge" (that is, do not be carried away by the heart only); "and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience."[2]

Watch yourselves—your passions, especially in your home life, where they appear freely, like moles in a safe place. Outside our own

[1] S. Matt. xi. 12. [2] 2 S. Pet. i. 5, 6.

home, some of our passions are usually screened by other more decorous passions, whilst at home there is no possibility of driving away these black moles that undermine the integrity of our soul.

When reprimanding your subordinates for their faults, carefully restrain yourself from anger, irritation, and disturbance, and be gentle, full of love, dignified and quiet. If the subordinate you have to correct takes offence, gently observe to him that you have no intention of offending and irritating him, that you sincerely wish him well, and that he should be orderly in his work, and that it is not him that you are annoyed with, but the disorder that he occasions. Do not offend his pride and dignity by exalting yourself in his eyes and lowering him. If you have this weakness (pride) yourself, better leave the correction of another and first cure yourself: "First cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."[1] In the opposite case you will only irritate your brother, and not do him any moral good. Be gentle and indulgent to others when you hear of their faults, remembering that you, too, have similar or greater faults. You reprove another, for instance, for drunkenness; but if you drink yourself, or even if you do not drink, but indulge yourself with dainties, are given to gluttony,

[1] S. Matt. vii. 5.

surfeiting, then you sin, as much as he does. Correct yourself of your gluttony, and then you will be able to speak strongly against drunkenness in others. You accuse another of negligence in his service, but perhaps you yourself are also negligent. "Physician, heal thyself."[1]

Speak and do everything right undoubtingly, boldly, firmly, and decidedly. Avoid doubts, timidity, languor, and indecision. "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love."[2] Our Lord is the Lord of powers.

Idle talk, or amusement with trifles in the society of guests, deprives the heart of faith, of the fear of God, and of love for God. Guests are a scourge for a pious heart. Of course, it is understood that I refer to guests who only occupy themselves with trifles. Serious, religiously minded guests are very different.

The characteristics of the men of the second half of the present nineteenth century are: —self-worship, self-government (autonomy), materialism in life, and spiritual scepticism (incredulity).

Lord, Thou Thyself hast said by Thy most pure lips: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."[3]

[1] S. Luke iv. 23. [2] 2 Tim. i. 7.
[3] S. Matt. v. 48.

I long to be perfect. Be Thou therefore every petition for me, for Thou hast also said: "For without Me ye can do nothing."[1]

§ 2. The Education of the Mind.

Wisdom . . . is the breath of the power of God, and a pure influence flowing from the glory of the Almighty . . . and in all ages entering into holy souls, she maketh them friends of God, and prophets.—Wisdom vii. 25, 27.

Truth is the foundation of everything that has been created. Let truth be also the foundation of all your works (both inward and outward), and especially the foundation of your prayers. Let all your life, all your works, all your thoughts, and all your desires be founded upon truth.

How must we look upon the gifts of intellect, feeling, and freedom? With the intellect we must learn to know God in the works of His creation, revelation, providence, and in the destinies of men; with the heart we must feel God's love, His most heavenly peace, the sweetness of His love, we must love our neighbour, sympathise with him in joy and in sorrow, in health and in sickness, in poverty or in wealth, in distinction and in low estate (humiliation); we must use freedom, as a means, as an instrument

[1] S. John xv. 5.

for doing as much good as possible, and for perfecting ourselves in every virtue, so as to render unto God fruits a hundredfold.

Let all knowledge relating to religion or faith be as though always new to you—that is, having the same importance, holiness, and interest.

What does to seek distraction mean? It means to wish to somehow fill the sickly emptiness of the soul, which was created for activity, and which cannot bear to be idle.

Remember that the intellect is the servant of the heart, which is our life; if it leads the heart to truth, peace, joy, and life, then it fulfils its destination, it is the truth; but if it leads the heart to doubt, disturbance, torment, despondency, darkness, then it does not fulfil its destination and is absolutely false ("science, falsely so called"[1]). If the heart feels peace, joy, ease from faith in anything, this is quite sufficient; it is unnecessary, then, to require from the reason proofs of the truth of such an object; it is undoubtedly true, the heart asserts it by its life, for the purpose of all investigations is truth and life.

Do not forget yourself in looking upon the beauty of the human face, but look upon the soul; do not look upon the man's garment

[1] Tim. vi. 20.

(the body being his temporary garment), but look upon him who is clothed in it. Do not admire the magnificence of the mansion, but look upon the dweller who lives in it and what he is; otherwise, you will offend the image of God in the man, will dishonour the King by worshipping His servant and not rendering unto Him even the least of the honour due to Him. Also, do not look upon the beauty of the printing of a book, but look upon the spirit of the book; otherwise you will depreciate the spirit and exalt the flesh; for the letters are the flesh, and the contents of the book the spirit. Do not be allured by the melodious sounds of an instrument or of a voice, but by their effect upon the soul, or by the words of the song, consider what their spirit is: if the sounds produce upon your soul tranquil, chaste, holy feelings, then listen to them and feed your soul with them; whilst, if they give rise in your soul to passions, then leave off listening to them, and throw aside both the flesh and the spirit of the music.

In educating, it is extremely dangerous to only develop the understanding and intellect, and not pay attention to the heart. We must, above all, pay attention to the heart, for the heart is life, but life corrupted by sin. It is necessary to purify this source of life, to kindle in it the pure flame of life, so that it should burn and not be extinguished; and should direct all the thoughts, desires, and tendencies of the man

through all his life. Society is corrupted precisely through the want of Christian education. It is time that Christians should understand the Lord, should understand what He requires of us; namely, a pure heart. "Blessed are the pure in heart."[1] Listen to His sweetest voice in the Gospel. The true life of our heart is Christ ("Christ liveth in me"[2]). Let all of you learn wisdom of the Apostle. This should be our common problem: to bring Christ to dwell in our hearts through faith.

Want of spiritual education, of the development, of the softening and amendment of the heart is a thousand times more culpable than want of mental education; for a mentally uneducated man is in darkness and is deserving of indulgence and pity, whilst an educated man, given up to the passions and vices, to malice, pride, scorn, envy, gluttony, surfeiting, drunkenness, covetousness, fornication, and other passions, with all his knowledge, and also with the knowledge of the will of God, is a man whose heart is hardened, and who is dead to God; for he does not apply the principles he has learned to practice; he does not fulfil the will of God, but transgresses it with even greater fearlessness and insolence than the uneducated. The uneducated man's simplicity of heart, meekness, gentleness, humility, silence, and patience are dearer to God than all our knowledge, all our

[1] S. Matt. v. 8 [2] Gal. ii. 20.

external polish, than all our studied expressions, all our feigned courtesy, than all our lengthy prayers, than all our artful speeches. Even sins themselves, being sins of ignorance, are more excusable in the uneducated. Therefore respect simple want of education and learn from it that which is not possessed by the so-styled educated —that is, simplicity, gentleness, patience, and other virtues. The uneducated are the babes in Christ, to whom the Lord sometimes reveals His mysteries.

Modern, false education estranges from the true Light "which lighteth every man that cometh into the world,"[1] and does not approach it. But without Christ all education is vanity.

In many worldly magazines and newspapers, the number of which has so greatly increased, there breathes an earthly spirit, frequently impious, whilst the Christian, in his hope, is a citizen not only of the earth, but also of heaven, and, therefore, he ought also to meditate upon heavenly things. The heathen writings of antiquity were, it would seem, often better and purer (Cicero, for instance), higher in their foundation and motive, than some writings of Christian peoples. The Personal Word of the Father, our Lord Jesus Christ, is continually and greatly offended by Christian people, who are gifted with speech, and ought to be God-

[1] S. John i. 9.

like, both in their speech and writings, whilst now their words are often wasted in vain, and even to tempt the Christian, who is turned aside by worldly writings from reading the Word of God and the writings of the Holy Fathers. The editors and publishers of worldly magazines and newspapers ensnare and entice the flock of Christ by the incense of flattering words. O Word of God! What answer shall we give at Thy terrible Judgment?

If you read worldly magazines and newspapers, and derive some profit from them, as a citizen, a Christian, and a member of a family, then you ought still more and still oftener to read the Gospel and the writings of the Holy Fathers; for it would be sinful for a Christian, who reads worldly writings, not to read divinely inspired ones. If you follow the events of the outer world, do not lose sight of your inner world, your own soul besides: it is nearer and dearer to you. Only to read worldly magazines and newspapers means only to live with one side of the soul, and not with the whole soul; or only to live by the flesh, and not by the spirit. Everything worldly will come to an end with the world itself. And "the world passeth away, and the lust thereof [all its devices]; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."[1]

Here is a society of men of the world: they

[1] S. John ii. 17.

go on talking and talking, for the greater part amusing themselves with trifles, and there is no mention of God—the common Father of all—of His love for us, of the future life, of recompense; why is it so? Because they are ashamed to speak of God. But what is still more surprising is that even persons deeming themselves pious, themselves luminaries, seldom speak of God, of Christ the Saviour, of the preciousness of time, of abstinence, of the resurrection from the dead, of judgment, of future bliss and everlasting torments, either in their family circle or amongst men of the world, but often spend their time in futile conversations, games, and occupations! This is, again, because they are ashamed to converse upon such subjects, being afraid to weary others, or fearing that they themselves may not be able to converse heartily upon spiritual subjects. O adulterous and sinful world! Woe unto thee at the day of judgment by the universal and impartial Judge! "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not."[1] Yes, the Lord and Creator of all is not received by us! He is not received into our houses, nor into our conversations; or, else, when a man reads a religious book or prays aloud, why does he sometimes do so as if against his will, reluctantly, his tongue hesitating? His mouth speaketh not out of the abundance of the heart, but out of straitness and emptiness it can scarcely speak at all.

[1] S. John i. 11.

Why is this so? It proceeds from the neglect of reading books and of prayer, and from false shame sown in the heart by the Devil. What miserable creatures we men are! We are ashamed of that which ought to be regarded as the highest honour. O ungrateful and evil-natured creatures! What torments do we not deserve for such conduct!

§ 3. The Education of the Spirit.

To be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.—Rom. viii. 6.

Who will not agree with these words of the Apostle? The carnal mind is indeed death. Draw nigh, you who are mercenary, covetous, envious, selfish, proud, ambitious, and let us look upon you, upon your actions and your life! Disclose to us, if you will, the thoughts of your heart! We shall be convinced by you—a living example—that the carnal mind is death. You do not live the true life; you are spiritually dead; you that have freedom are inwardly bound; you that have intelligence are as the foolish, because "the light that is in thee is darkness."[1] You have received from God a heart capable of delighting in everything that is true, holy, good, and beautiful; but by the carnal mind you have stifled in it all noble feelings, all noble impulses; you have become a corpse;

[1] S. Matt. vi. 23.

"ye have no life in you."[1] But "to be spiritually minded is life and peace." Let any Christian man, leading the life of faith, destroying the passions within him, and thinking "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue and if there be any praise,"[2] come to us, and tell us what he feels in his soul from the mind of the Spirit. He will say, I feel in my heart continual "peace and joy in the Holy Ghost,"[3] my heart expands, I feel an abundance of life. I mock at everything carnal; I wonder how it can have such a great power over the hearts of carnal men, and I give myself up to the continual contemplation of the heavenly, spiritual, invisible blessings prepared for those who love God.

"He that gathereth not with Me scattereth."[4] It is necessary to advance in the spiritual life, and ascend higher and higher; to increase more and more the stores of our good works. If we remain stationary at one point of moral perfection, upon one step of the Christian ascent, it is equal to our going back; if we do not gather, it is equal to scattering.

The inner man, amidst worldly vanity, amidst

[1] S. John vi. 53.
[2] Phil. iv. 8.
[3] Rom. xiv. 17.
[4] S. Luke xi. 23.

the darkness of his flesh, is not so bound by the temptations of the evil one, and looks out more freely early in the morning just after waking up, as a fish sometimes throws itself up playfully on the surface of the water. All the remaining time he is enveloped in almost impenetrable darkness, his eyes are covered with a bandage, which conceals from him the true state of things spiritual and physical. Take advantage of these morning hours, which are the hours of a new life, or of a life renewed by temporary sleep. They show us in part that state in which we shall be when we shall rise up renewed on that great and universal morning of the nightless day of resurrection, or when we shall rid ourselves of this mortal body.

During the night our soul is free from worldly vanities, and therefore the spiritual world can act upon it more freely, and it is free to receive spiritual impressions; so that if the man is a righteous one, his thoughts and the inclinations of his heart are the thoughts and inclinations of the Lord Himself, or of the Angels and Saints; whilst if he is an unrepentant sinner, they are the thoughts and inclinations of the Devil himself.

In ordinary human knowledge, we learn some subject once thoroughly, and often know it well during the whole of our lifetime without our knowledge of it becoming obscured. But in the

matter of religion and faith this is not so; we think that once we have learnt, felt, and touched it, the subject will always remain clear, tangible, and beloved of our soul; but it is not so: it will a thousand times become obscured to us, removed from us, and will as it were vanish from us, so that at times we feel quite indifferent to the object by which we used to live and breathe, and it will sometimes be necessary to clear the way to it for ourselves by sighs and tears, in order to see it clearly again, to grasp and embrace it with our heart. This is caused by sin.

Every one must bear in mind that every man possesses, besides his animal nature, a spiritual nature also; that as the animal nature has its requirements, the spiritual one has its own requirements too. The requirements of the animal nature are drink, food, sleep, breath, light, clothing, warmth; whilst those of the spiritual nature are meditation, feeling, speaking, communion with God through prayer, Divine service, the sacraments, instruction in the Word of God, and fellowship with our neighbour through mutual conversation, charitable help, mutual instruction and teaching. We must also bear in mind that our animal nature is temporal, transitory, perishable, whilst the spiritual one is eternal, not transitory and indestructible; that we must despise the flesh as perishable, and care for the soul, which is

immortal, for its salvation, its enlightenment, its cleansing from sin's passions and vices, for its adornment with such virtues as meekness, humility, gentleness, courage, patience, submission, and obedience to God and men, purity and abstinence. Grant wisdom, O Lord, to every man that he may ever bear this in mind!

The body, being only the temporal garment of the soul, is perishable, and does not constitute the true life of the man. The true life is the spiritual life. If you rend, if you destroy the man's garment, still he himself remains alive; so also after the slaying, after the death, the corruption of the body, the soul remains alive. Let us then chiefly care for the soul, for its salvation!

That which a man loves, to which he turns, that he will find. If he loves earthly things, he will find earthly things, and these earthly things will abide in his heart, will communicate their earthliness to him and will find him; if he loves heavenly things, he will find heavenly things, and they will abide in his heart and give him life. We must not set our hearts upon anything earthly, for the spirit of evil is incorporated in all earthly things when we use them immoderately and in excess, this spirit having become earthly by excessive opposition to God.

The carnal man does not understand the

spiritual blessedness that proceeds from prayer and virtue, and cannot comprehend even in a small degree what the blessedness in the next world will be. He does not know anything higher than earthly carnal happiness, and considers future blessings as imaginary visions. But the spiritual man knows by experience the blessedness of the virtuous soul, and foretastes future blessedness in his heart.

The more a man leads the spiritual life, the more he becomes spiritualised: he begins to see God in everything; the manifestation of His power and might in everything; he sees himself always and everywhere abiding in God, and depending upon God even in the smallest matters. But the more a man leads the carnal mode of life, the more carnal he becomes: he does not see God in everything, not even in the most wonderful manifestations of His divine powers—he sees flesh and matter in everything, and nowhere, nor at any time, is God before his eyes.[1]

Do you pay sufficient attention to the state of your soul? whether it is in good health; and, seeing that it lives, is its life vigorous? And, if its present temporal life is happy, then is its eternal life, its eternal happiness, ensured by anything—for instance, by faith—is there in your soul a lively faith in God, in the Saviour, in the Church, by good works, meekness, humility,

[1] Psalm xxxvi. 2.

gentleness, love of truth and honesty, abstinence chastity, mercy, patience, obedience, industry, and others? If the reverse is the case, then all your labour is in vain. The soul, perhaps, does many things worthy of wonder, but it will be itself lost. "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"[1]

All my happiness and unhappiness are contained in the thoughts and inclinations of my heart. If the thoughts and inclinations of my heart are in accord with God's truth or with the will of my God, then I am at rest, filled with Divine light, joy, and blessedness; if not, I am uneasy, filled with spiritual, soul-corrupting darkness, heaviness, and despondency. If I completely change the false, impious thoughts and inclinations of my heart into true ones, pleasing to God, then I again obtain rest and blessedness.

If any thought is life to the heart, then it is truth; if, on the contrary, it is anguish and death to the heart, then it is a lie. Our Lord is peace and life, and He dwells in our hearts by peace and life.

Peace is the integrity and health of the soul; to lose peace is to lose spiritual health.

When holy peace reigns in my soul, then

[1] S. Matt. xvi. 26.

surely the King of Peace dwells within me, the Lord Jesus Christ, with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, and then especially I ought to be full of feelings of gratitude to the Lord of Peace, and endeavour with all my strength to preserve this peace within me by means of fervent prayer and by abstaining from every sin, both inward and outward.

In what does the life of a Christian consist? In having nothing in the heart but Christ, or, if possessing earthly blessings, in not in the least attaching himself to them, but in clinging with the whole heart to Christ.

I myself am all infirmity, misery. God is my strength. This conviction is my highest wisdom, making me blessed.

Lord! let my heart cling to Thee alone, and do not let it cling to anything earthly; for in earthly attachments there is sorrow, oppression, and torment. Let nothing earthly be dear to my heart, but grant that I may value Thee, the one Lord, above all, as well as everything heavenly, and the soul created after Thine image immortal, reasonable, speaking, free, the breath of Thy mouth. Let nothing earthly—money, food, dress, rank, signs of distinction, etc.—become the idol of my heart. We must accustom ourselves to the simplest, least dainty of food, in order that the heart should not be allured by

it, and even that in moderation, only for imparting strength.)

§ 4. Humility.

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.—Phil. ii. 5, 7.

To be humble means to consider ourselves deserving, for our sins, of every humiliation, injury, persecution, and even blows; and to be meek means to patiently endure injustice, abuse, etc., and to pray for our enemies.

If you wish to be truly humble, then consider yourself lower than all, worthy of being trampled on by all; for you yourself daily, hourly trample upon the law of the Lord, and therefore upon the Lord Himself.

When any one, out of kindness, praises you to others, and they transmit these praises to you, do not consider them as a just tribute of esteem really due to you, but ascribe them solely to the kindness of heart of the person who thus spoke of you, and pray to God for him, that God may strengthen him in his kindness of heart and in every virtue; but acknowledge yourself to be the greatest of sinners, not

out of humility, but truthfully, actually, knowing as you do your evil deeds.

A true Christian behaves in this life so that it may be a preparation for the future one, and not only a life here below. In his actions he does not think what will be said of him here, but of what will be said there in Heaven; he represents to himself that he is always in the presence of God, of the angels and all the saints, and remembers that some day they will bear witness of his thoughts, words, and deeds.

A deep feeling of spiritual poverty, a lamentation at the existence of evil, a thirst after salvation, are to be found in every straightforward and humble soul.

You care for the opinion of men, for human glory; set yourself actively to heal this infirmity of your heart. Think and be anxious only for the glory of God. Consider human dishonour as nothing. When you ought to honour a poor or uneducated and rough father, or mother, or relation, or friend, or acquaintance before distinguished and educated men of this world, or to defend any truth in an assembly that scoffs at it, then have in view God alone and His Commandments, also your parents, or the relation, friend, or acquaintance, and God's truth, and be steadfast in your respect for them, without cowardice and shame, without being in the

least shamed by those present or by your questioners.

When you are slandered, and therefore grow disturbed and sick at heart, it shows that pride is in you, and that it must be wounded and driven out by outward dishonour. Therefore do not be irritated by derision, and do not bear malice against those who hate you and slander you, but love them as your physicians, whom God has sent you to instruct you and to teach you humility, and pray to God for them. "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you."[1] Say to yourself: "It is not me that they slander, but my evil passions; not me that they strike, but that viper which nestles in my heart, and smarts when anybody speaks ill of it. I will comfort myself with the thought that, perhaps, these good people will drive it from my heart by their caustic words, and my heart will then cease to ache." Therefore, thank God for outward dishonour: those who endure dishonour here will not be subjected to it in the next world. "She hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins."[2] "Lord, Thou wilt ordain peace for us: for Thou also hast wrought all our works in us."[3]

Keep a strict watch against every appearance of pride: it appears imperceptibly, particularly

[1] S. Matt. v. 44. [2] Isa. xl. 2.
[3] Isa. xxvi. 12.

in time of vexation and irritability against others for quite unimportant causes.

When we are reproached for anything by others, it should not irritate us nor make us despondent, but it should humble us, being morally worthless, and should make us turn to God with the fervent prayer that He may heal our infirmities and by His grace supply us with that which is wanting in us. To grow irritated, especially when we are reproached with weaknesses really existing in us, would be only adding one malady to another, one passion to another; it would mean that we are sick with the voluntary blindness of self-love, which does not wish to see its own dark side, and leads to voluntary destruction. To despond is also most foolish, for by the help of God's grace the Christian can always change for the better if he wishes: and it is for this purpose that the Lord sends us accusers, in order that they may open our spiritual eyes, and that we may see the deformity of our deeds, and seeing, correct ourselves; but not for the purpose of casting us into despondency. Despondency is itself a sin and the work of the Devil. Reproof ought to produce in us the "godly sorrow, which worketh repentance to salvation,"[1] and not the sorrow of self-love.

Sometimes younger people, or those of equal

[1] 2 Cor. vii. 10.

station, or older ones, teach you by means of hints which you cannot endure, and you are vexed with your teachers. We must endure and listen with love to everything useful coming from any one, whoever he may be. Our self-love conceals our faults from us, but they are more visible to others. This is why they remark them to us. Remember that "we are members one of another,"[1] and are thus even obliged to mutually correct each other. If you do not bear being instructed by others, and are vexed with those who teach you, it means that you are proud, and this shows that the fault, of which others hint that you should correct yourself, is really in you.

Receive every one who comes to you, especially with a spiritual purpose, with a kind and cheerful aspect, although he or she may be a beggar, and humble yourself inwardly before everybody, counting yourself lower than he or she, for you are placed by Christ Himself to be the servant of all, and all are His members, although like you they bear the wounds of sin.

There is absolutely nothing for a Christian to be proud of in accomplishing works of righteousness, for he is saved, and is being constantly saved, from every evil through faith alone, in the same manner as he accomplishes works of righteousness also by the same faith. "For by

[1] Eph. iv. 25.

grace are ye saved through faith; and that (faith itself) not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast.' [1] So that no one can be proud of anything.

Spiritual poverty consists in esteeming oneself as though not existing, and God alone as existing; in honouring His words above everything in the world, and in not sparing anything to fulfil them, even one's own life; in considering God's Will in everything, both for ourselves and others, entirely renouncing our own will. The man who is poor in spirit desires and says with his whole heart: "Hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." It is as though he himself disappears; everywhere and in everything he wishes to see God—in himself and in others. "Let every thing be Thine, not mine." He wishes to contemplate God's holiness in himself and in all His kingdom, also His will; also to see Him alone entirely filling the human heart, as it should be, because He alone is all-merciful and all-perfect, all-creating; whilst the enemy—the Devil and his instruments, and those who oppose God—are thieves in the kingdom of God, and adversaries of God. To him who is poor in spirit the whole world is as nothing. Everywhere he sees God alone giving life to everything, and ruling everything; for him there is no place without God, no moment without God;

[1] Eph. ii. 8, 9.

everywhere and at every minute he is with God, and as though with Him alone. He who is poor in spirit does not dare and does not think of trying to comprehend the incomprehensible, to discover God's mysteries, to philosophise on the highest; he believes in the single word of the Lord, the Life-giver, knowing that every word of His is truth, spirit, and eternal life; and in the words of His Church, ever instructed in all truth by the Holy Ghost, he believes as a child believes his father or mother, not requiring proofs, but perfectly relying upon them. He who is poor in spirit considers himself the very last and the most sinful of all, reckons himself worthy of being trampled under foot by every one.

Value highly, and always preserve Christian meekness and kindness, mutual peace and love, crushing by every possible means the impulses of self-love, malice, irritability, and disturbance. Do not be disturbed and angered when anybody tells you a falsehood to your face, or makes any unjust pretension, or speaks offensively, or boldly detects any of your weaknesses or passions, the wrongfulness of which, through your self-love, you did not suspect. Always first coolly reflect over what your opponent says to you, as well as over your own words and conduct, and if, upon an entirely impartial consideration of your words and actions, you find them just, then let your conscience be at rest,

and do not heed the words of your adversary, either remaining silent before him, or showing him his error quietly, gently, in all kindness of heart; but should you find yourself guilty of that which your adversary detects in you, then, putting aside self-love and pride, ask pardon for your fault, and endeavour to correct yourself in future. We are often angry with straightforward, frank people for openly disclosing our iniquities. We ought to value such people, and forgive them, if by their bold speaking they break down our self-love. They are, in a moral sense, the surgeons who cut off, with a sharp word, the rottenness of the heart, and through arousing our self-love, they awaken, in the soul deadened by sin, a consciousness of sin and a vital reaction.

In order to rule others, we must first learn to rule ourselves; in order to teach others, we must acquire knowledge ourselves. If I do not know how to control myself, if there is not in me the spirit of self-command, the spirit of meekness, holiness, love and righteousness, then I am a bad director. If I am the sport of every kind of passion, it is better for me not to undertake to rule others, so as not to do greater harm than good, both to myself and to them.

When I look more closely upon some of the poor, and talk with them, then I see how meek, lovable, humble, simple-hearted, truly kind, poor

in body, but rich in spirit they are. They make me—I who am rough, proud, evil, scornful, irritable, crafty, cold towards God and men, envious and avaricious—ashamed of myself. These are the true friends of God. And the enemy, being aware of their spiritual treasures, awakens in his servants—that is, in proud, rich men—contempt and ill-feeling towards them, and would like to wipe them off the face of the earth, as if they had no right to live and walk upon it. O friends of my God, my poor brethren! It is you who are the truly rich in spirit, whilst I am the real beggar, accursed and poor! You are worthy of sincere respect from us, who possess the blessings of this world in abundance, but who are poor and needy in virtues—abstinence, meekness, humility, kindness, sincerity, fervour, and warmth towards God and our neighbour. Lord! teach me to despise outward things, to turn my mental vision inwardly, and to value inward, and despise outward, things. Grant that I may observe this in my relations towards the rich and powerful of this world!

§ 5. Love and Forgiveness.

If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit.—1 S. John iv. 12, 13.

The purer the heart is, the larger it is, and the more able it is to find room within it for a greater number of beloved ones; whilst the more sinful it is, the more contracted it becomes, and the less number of beloved can it find room for, because it is limited by self-love, and that love is a false one. We love ourselves in objects unworthy of the immortal soul—in silver and gold, in adultery, in drunkenness, and such like.

Love does not reflect. Love is simple. Love never mistakes. Likewise believe and trust without reflection, for faith and trust are also simple; or better: God, in Whom we believe and in Whom we trust, is an incomplex Being, as He is also simply love. Amen.

How can we love God with all our heart, with all our soul and all our strength, and with all our thoughts? With all our heart means undividedly, not dividing ourselves between the love of God and love of the world, or in general of creatures. If, for instance, you pray, pray with an undivided heart, not allowing your

attention to be distracted by vain thoughts, by earthly attachments; be wholly in God, in His love, with all your soul—that is, do not only love Him with part of your soul; not only with your mind, without your heart and will sharing in this love; with all your strength, not with half your strength or slightly. When you have to fulfil any commandment, fulfil it most zealously, unto sweat and blood, unto laying down your life for it, if necessary, but not slothfully, indolently or unwillingly.

Our life is love—yes, love. And where there is love, there is God; and where God is, there is every good. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." And therefore joyfully feed and delight all, joyfully gratify all and trust in the Heavenly Father for everything, in the Father of bounties, and the God of every consolation. Offer that which is dear to you as a sacrifice of love for your neighbour. Bring your Isaac, your heart, with its many passions, as a sacrifice to God, stab it of your own free will, crucify the flesh with its passions and lusts. As you have received everything from God, be ready to give back everything to God, so that having been faithful in small things you may afterwards be made ruler over many things. "Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things."[1]

[1] S. Matt. xxv. 23.

Look upon all passions as upon illusions, as I have found out a thousand times. Amen.

"Charity thinketh no evil."[1] To think evil is the work of the Devil: it is the Devil in the man who makes him think evil. Therefore, do not have any ill-feeling in your heart against your friend, and do not think evil, lest you become united to the Devil. "Overcome evil with good,"[2] that is, the evil which you see or suspect. Your spiritual wisdom and your exploit of Christian love consist in this.

It is better not to pass on the words of reproach that have been transmitted to us by any one, but to keep silence concerning them, or transmit words of love and good-will, then our spirit will be tranquil. But to pass on words of animosity and envy is very hurtful; they often produce, in the impatient and self-loving men, to whom they refer, a spiritual tempest, rekindle extinct enmity, and occasion dissension. We must have Christian patience, and the wisdom of the serpent.

It is necessary that the following words should be indelibly engraved upon our hearts, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,"[3] and that these words should guide our heart upon meeting with any one, at any time, whether he comes to us or we go to him; whether we have to do

[1] 1 Cor. xiii. 5. [2] Rom. xii. 21.
[3] S. Mark xii. 31.

some work for him, or to give him anything, or simply to converse with him. Thus bear in your heart the words "love him as thyself," and carry on a perpetual mental war for the observance of these living words of our Lord. Force yourself to mutual love; intentionally trouble and disturb the worm of self-love and evil concealed within you; crucify it, and conquer it "by the power of" the "might"[1] of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Charity, it is said, "rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth."[2] It often happens to us to see the unrighteous, sinful doings of men, or to hear of them, and we have a sinful habit of rejoicing at such doings, and of shamelessly expressing our joy by foolish laughter. This is wrong, unchristian, uncharitable, and impious. It shows that we have not Christian love for our neighbour in our hearts: for charity "rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth."[3] Let us, therefore, cease doing this, so that we may not be condemned with the workers of iniquity.

In order to test yourself, whether you love your neighbour in accordance with the Gospel, pay attention to yourself at the time when others offend you, abuse you, mock at you, or do not render you the respect due to you, and which is customary in social intercourse, or when your

[1] Eph. vi. 10. [2] 1 Cor. xiii. 9. [3] *Ibid.*

subordinates err against the rules of the service, and are negligent. If you remain calm on such occasions, are not filled with the spirit of enmity, hatred, impatience; if you continue to love these persons as much as previously, before their offences or negligence, then you do love your neighbour in accordance with the Gospel; but if you become irritable, angry, agitated, then you do not do so. "If ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others?"[1]

Rejoice at every opportunity of showing kindness to your neighbour as a true Christian who strives to store up as many good works as possible, especially the treasures of love. Do not rejoice when others show you kindness and love, consider yourself unworthy of it; but rejoice when an occasion presents itself for you to show love. Show love simply, without any deviation into cunning thoughts, without any trivial, worldly, covetous calculations, remembering that love is God Himself. Remember that He sees all your ways, sees all the thoughts and movements of your heart.

God is long-suffering and merciful to you; this you experience many times every day. Be long-suffering and merciful to your brethren, also fulfilling the words of the Apostle, who thus speaks of charity before everything: "Charity suffereth long, and is kind."[2] You

[1] S. Matt. v. 47; S. Luke vi. 32.

[2] 1 Cor. xiii. 4.

desire that the Lord should rejoice you by His love, rejoice on your part the hearts of others by your tender love and kindness.

When your brother sins against you in any way—for instance, if he speaks ill of you, or transmits with an evil intention your words in a perverted form to another, or calumniates you—do not be angered against him, but seek to find in him those good qualities which undoubtedly exist in every man, and dwell lovingly on them, despising his evil calumnies concerning you as dross, not worth attention, as an illusion of the Devil. The gold-diggers do not pay attention to the quantity of sand and dirt in the gold-dust, but only look for the grains of gold; and though they are but few, they value this small quantity, and wash it out of heaps of useless sand. God acts in a like manner with us, cleansing us with great and long forbearance.

Every person that does any evil, that gratifies any passion, is sufficiently punished by the evil he has committed, by the passion he serves, but chiefly by the fact that he withdraws Himself from God, and God withdraws Himself from him: it would therefore be insane and most inhuman to nourish anger against such a man; it would be the same as to drown a sinking man, or push into the fire a person who is already being devoured by the flame. To such a man,

as to one in danger of perishing, we must show double love, and pray fervently to God for him; not judging him, not rejoicing at his misfortune.

If you meet with inattention, or even disdain, from strangers, do not be hurt or take offence at it, but say to yourself: "I am worthy of this. Glory to Thee, my Lord, that Thou hast granted unto me, an unworthy one, to receive dishonour from men like unto myself!" On your part always show love to all, especially to your relations, sincerely, zealously, heartily, loudly; not coldly and languidly, hypocritically, reluctantly, as if in a whisper.

We ought not to grieve or become irritated at anything, because, by frequent vexation and irritation, we form the morally and physically very injurious habit of irritability, whilst by bearing opposition with equanimity we form the good and useful habit of enduring everything calmly and patiently. Many occasions for vexation may arise in this life through our innumerable mutual imperfections, and if we were to become irritated upon every such occasion, our life could not last more than a few months. Besides, matters cannot be set right by vexation and irritation, but, on the contrary, only become worse. Therefore, it is better to be always calm, even always full of love and respect for morally sick humanity, or to speak more particularly in regard to our

friends, relatives, and subordinates. For man is not an angel, and besides, our life is so constituted that we sin daily, and almost involuntarily, even though we do not wish: "For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil, which I would not, that I do."[1] And the Lord taught us to look indulgently upon the frequent negligences and falls of men, having said: "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."[2] All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."[3] And who of us does not wish that others should behave indulgently and patiently to him in his needs, stumblings and falls, negligences and omissions? This is why the Apostle also teaches us long-suffering and indulgence: "Charity," says the Apostle Paul, "suffereth long, and is kind . . . is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity . . . beareth all things . . . never faileth."[4]

Do not pay attention to the words of an arrogant man, but rather to their power. It often happens that words that appear harsh at first sight, do not proceed from any harshness of the heart, but only from habit. How would it be if every one paid strict critical attention to our words, without Christian love, indulgent, sheltering, kindly, and patient? We must have died long ago.

[1] Rom. vii. 19.
[2] S. Matt. vi. 12.
[3] S. Matt. vii. 12.
[4] 1 Cor. xiii. 4-8.

How good Thou art, Lord, and how near art Thou to us—so near that we may always converse with Thee, be comforted by Thee, breathe through Thee, be enlightened by Thee, find peace in Thee, obtain spiritual breadth in Thee. Lord! teach me simplicity of love for Thee and my neighbour, so that I may ever be with Thee, that I may ever find peace in Thee. Lord! grant that I may not for a single moment have fellowship with the most abominable, most evil enemy the Devil, neither by malice, nor pride, nor envy, nor avarice, nor by love of gain, nor gluttony, nor impure thoughts, nor blasphemy, nor despondency, nor falsehood, nor by anything sinful. Grant that I may ever be wholly Thine!

§ 6. ALMSGIVING.

Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.—S. MATT. XXV. 40.

What is the false gratitude to God? Gratitude is false when, having received bountiful, undeserved spiritual and material gifts from God, people thank God for them with their tongue, and use them only for their own advantage, not sharing them with their neighbours; when they obtain them and conceal them in their treasuries, chests, libraries; thus depriving many of their brethren of spiritual enlightenment, instruction,

and consolation; or of food, drink, clothing, dwelling; or of being cured of their maladies; or of the means of moving from one place to another for the purpose of acquiring means of subsistence. Such gratitude is false and impious. It means thanking God with the tongue, and meanwhile showing extreme ingratitude and ill-nature in deed. But how many such grateful—or, rather, ungrateful men there are!

Love for God and our neighbour, in our present corrupt state, is impossible without self-sacrifice; he who wishes to fulfil the commandment concerning love for God and his neighbour, ought to devote himself in good time to great deeds and privations for the sake of those that he loves. (Amen.) "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He (the Christ) laid down His life for us."[1] "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."[2]

"And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved; for he had great possessions."[3] We, too, often become sad and weak in heart and body at a single word asking a sacrifice of us for the sake of the heavenly kingdom, although we were brave enough before.

He truly bestows charity who gives from his

[1] 1 S. John iii. 16. [2] S. John xv. 13.
[3] S. Mark x. 22.

heart, and with a loving heart. He is truly merciful who converses with every one heartily, and not only with the intellect and lips, who renders sincere, hearty respect to every one, who preaches the Word of God and serves God with a true heart, not hypocritically—in a word, who embraces all, and carries all in his heart by love, despising everything material that may become a hindrance to love between himself and his neighbour—such a one is truly merciful.

"Thou shalt love Thy neighbour as thyself."[1] We ought to have all things in common. As the sun, the air, fire, water, and earth are common to us all, so ought also (in part) food and drink, money, books, and (in general) all the Lord's gifts to be shared in common; for they are given in common to all, and yet are easily divisible for distribution amongst many. For we have nothing of our own, but everything belongs to God. And it is not just for the rich to keep their superfluity in their treasuries when there are so many poor people in need of the means of existence, of necessary clothing and dwellings. However, it is just that the laborious should enjoy abundance, and that the idle should endure poverty and misery. Therefore, if we know that some are poor only through their own idleness and laziness, with such we are not obliged to share the abundance earned by our labour. "If any would not work," says

[1] S. Mark xii. 31.

the Apostle Paul, "neither should he eat."[1] But the crying poverty arising from old age, exhaustion, from sickness, from fruitless and badly paid labour, from really difficult conditions of life, from a numerous family, from bad harvests, we must always hasten to help, especially those of us who are rich. We must be guided by the history of the times of the Apostles, by the example of the early Church.

Concerning modern works of charity. If you enjoy earthly blessings in full measure, and if you give to the needy, but indulge yourself still more, it means that you do good works without the least self-denial. Your works of charity are not great. But what else do we find? What are so-called works of charity? People arrange different entertainments with a charitable object —that is, they intentionally wish before all to serve their sinful flesh, and the Devil, and only afterwards their neighbour and God. But this is no charity at all! Such works only bear the name of charity. "Let us do evil, that good may come."[2] "Woe unto you that are full, for ye shall hunger! Woe unto you that laugh now, for ye shall mourn and weep!"[3]

Remember the Love that laid down His life for men, and do not spare your very life itself for your brother, but unmercifully crucify your

[1] 2 Thess. iii. 10. [2] Rom. iii. 8.
[3] S. Luke vi. 25.

carnal man, who turns you away from sacrificing yourself for your brother.

That man is of a noble and elevated spirit who mercifully and generously scatters his gifts upon all, and rejoices when he has an opportunity of doing good and giving pleasure to everybody without thinking of being rewarded for it. That man is of a noble and elevated spirit who never grows conceited and haughty towards those who frequent him and avail themselves of his bounties, does not neglect them in any respect, does not underrate them in any degree in his thoughts, but esteems them as he esteemed them at their first meeting with him, or much higher than at that time. As it is, it often happens that we grow conceited and proud towards those who have become ours, and, having become accustomed to them, speedily grow tired of them, and reckon them as nothing: we often place a man lower than a beloved animal or a beloved object.

When you give alms to one who begs of you, and who, apparently, is not deserving of, does not require, your charity—owing to which your heart grudges him the alms given—repent of this; for the Divine, holy Love also bestows His blessings upon us, even when we have a sufficiency of them already. Love for your neighbour ought to say to you, "Even although he has something, still it will do no harm if I

add to his prosperity (although, to tell the truth, a few pence will not greatly add to or amend his fortunes). God gives to me, why then should I not give to the needy?" I say to the needy, for who would hold out his hand without need? Had you only received gifts from God in accordance with your merits, you would have been a beggar yourself. God is bountiful to you, not in accordance with your merits, and you yourself wish that He should be bountiful. Why then, having plenty, do you not wish to be generous yourself to your brethren?

Bear in your heart continually the words, "Christ is Love," and endeavour to love all, sacrificing for the sake of love, not only your possessions, but even yourself.

Lord! teach me to bestow charity willingly, kindly, joyfully, and to believe that by bestowing it I do not lose, but gain, infinitely more than that which I give. Turn my eyes away from hard-hearted people who do not sympathise with the poor, who meet poverty with indifference, who judge, reproach, brand it with shameful names, and weaken my heart, so that I may not do good, so that I, too, may harden my heart against poverty. O my Lord, how many such people we meet with! Lord, amend works of charity! Lord, grant that every charity I bestow may be profitable, and may not do harm! Lord, accept Thyself charity in the person of Thy

poor. Lord, deign to help me to build a house for the poor in this town, concerning which I have already many times prayed to Thee, the all-merciful, almighty, most wise, wonderful![1]

§ 7. Trust in God.

Behold God is my Salvation; I will trust and not be afraid.—Isa. xii. 2.

Let that which tranquillises my thoughts and my heart be committed to writing as a memorial to me of the constant peace of my heart amidst the cares and vanities of life. What is it? It is the Christian saying, full of living trust and wonderful soothing power: "The Lord is everything to me." This is the priceless treasure! This is the precious jewel, possessing which we can be calm in every condition, rich in poverty, generous and kind to other people in the time of our wealth, and not losing hope even after having sinned. "The Lord is everything to me." He is my faith, my trust, my love, my strength, my power, my peace, my joy, my riches, my food, my drink, my raiment, my life—in a word, mine all. Thus, man, the Lord is everything to you; and you must be everything to the Lord. And, as all your treasure is contained in your heart and in your will, and God requires from you your heart, having

[1] The house has since been built.

said: "My son, give Me thine heart,"[1] therefore, in order to fulfil God's gracious and perfect will, renounce your own corrupt, passionate, seductive will; do not know your own will, know only God's will. "Not my will, but Thy will be done."

There is nothing impossible unto those who believe; lively and unshaken faith can accomplish great miracles in the twinkling of an eye. Besides, even without our sincere and firm faith, miracles are accomplished, such as the miracles of the sacraments; for God's mystery is always accomplished, even though we were incredulous or unbelieving at the time of its celebration. "Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?"[2] Our wickedness shall not overpower the unspeakable goodness and mercy of God; our dulness shall not overpower God's wisdom, nor our infirmity God's omnipotence.

Faith gives rest and joy; unbelief, troubles and wounds.

How many Christians there are who say, "I believe in God," without in reality believing! How many mouths are dumb when in the company of men it is necessary to defend the glory of God and of His saints, which is blasphemed by the children of this world! Some remain silent when it is necessary to support the conversation concerning God, or

[1] Prov. xxiii. 26 [2] Rom. iii. 3.

to put a stop to any disrespect or insolence. Many say, "I believe in God"; but should any misfortune or temptation arise, they grow faint-hearted and despondent. Sometimes they begin to murmur. And what becomes of all their faith? This should be the very time to show submission to the will of God, and to say, "Let it be as the Lord wills." "Blessed be the name of the Lord."[1] Otherwise it is evident that they only believe in God in the time of happiness, and renounce Him in the time of misfortune.

What is faith? Sureness of spiritual truth, of that which is, or of God; of the existence of the spiritual world with all its properties, similarly as we are sure of the existence of the material world with all its appurtenances. To believe means to be as sure of the reality of the spiritual world with all its properties and appurtenances as we are of the existence of the material world with all its objects and their properties. For instance, I am undoubtingly sure that God is eternal, all-good, all-wise, and almighty; and I do not for a moment think that He is not eternal, not all-good, not all-wise, not almighty. This signifies that I believe firmly and undoubtingly. I believe further that the Lord, being mercy itself, shall give everything that we ask Him, and I do not in the least doubt this: this means that I believe.

[1] Job i. 21.

Why should we thank God and good, charitable persons for everything? Chiefly for our profit, in order that the feelings of our soul should be more tender and finer; to cultivate the feeling of our dependence in all things upon God and good men, and grateful love towards them, as well as the feeling of our own nothingness without God, and of our own impotency to live without the help of kind people.

The means for confirming and strengthening Christian hope in us are—prayer, especially frequent sincere prayer, the confession of our sins, the frequent reading of the Word of God, and, above all, the frequent communion of the holy, life-giving mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS, AND THE LIFE EVERLASTING.

§ 1. Fellow-citizens with the Saints.

But ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels . . . and to the spirits of just men made perfect.—Heb. xii. 22, 23.

The saints of God live even after their death. Thus, I often hear in church the mother of God singing her wonderful, heart-penetrating song which she said in the house of her cousin Elizabeth, after the annunciation of the archangel. At times, I hear the song of Moses; the song of Zacharias—the father of the Forerunner; that of Hannah, the mother of the prophet Samuel; that of the three children; and that of Miriam. And how many holy singers of the New Testament delight until now the ear of the whole Church of God! And the Divine

service itself—the sacraments, the rites? Whose spirit is there, moving and touching our hearts? That of God and of His saints. Here is a proof for you of the immortality of men's souls. How is it that all these men have died, and yet are governing our lives after their death—they are dead and they still speak, instruct and touch us?

"Hail, Thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with Thee!"[1] Thus does the holy Church invoke the most holy Virgin, the mother of God. But the Lord is also with every pious soul that believes in Him. The Lord's abiding with the Virgin Mary before she conceived the Saviour is not a particularity proper to the most pure Virgin alone. The Lord is with every believing soul: "The Lord is with thee." These words may be said to every one who keeps the Lord's commandments. And the Lord is near unto all, only men themselves are far from Him by their hearts, by their thoughts, their intentions, and the inclinations of their hearts, as well as by their words and deeds, which are contrary to the law of God. "Lo, I am with you always," says our Lord, Who was born of the most holy Virgin, "even unto the end of the world";[2] that is, with every one of us, at every time, throughout all generations, all ages, upon the whole space of the earth, unto the end of the world.

[1] S. Luke i. 28. [2] S. Matt. xxviii. 20.

The minds of the angels cannot grasp and cannot sufficiently marvel at the wisdom, mercy, and omnipotence which the Lord has manifested to us in His Incarnation from the most holy Virgin Mary. "All angelic nature wonders at this great act of Thine Incarnation, beholding the unapproachable God in approachable man."[1] Glory to Thy mercy! Glory to Thy bountifulness! Glory to Thy wisdom! Glory to Thy power! Through His Incarnation the Lord has clearly taught us all the mysteries of faith, which were not known, or but little known, in the Old Testament. Through His Incarnation we, accursed sinners, have been deemed worthy of the Communion of His most pure Body and Blood, and are thus united to Him in the closest manner; we dwell in Him and He in us. Through His Incarnation the most holy Virgin has become our all-powerful Intercessor and our protection from sins, disasters, and misfortunes, praying for us day and night, our queen and lady, whose power no visible and invisible enemies can withstand, and our very mother by grace, in accordance with the words of Christ on the Cross to His disciple St. John: "Behold thy mother!"—and to her: "Behold thy son!"[2] Glory to Thy bountifulness, Lord!

You constantly notice that God does not tolerate the slightest momentary impurity in

[1] Acathistos Condakion ix.

[2] S. John xix. 26. 27.

you, and that peace and God Himself leave you immediately after the admittance of any impure thought into your heart. And you become the abode of the Devil if you do not immediately renounce the sin. So that at every sinful thought, and still more at every sinful word and deed, we must say, "This is the Devil." Whilst at every holy and good thought, word, and deed, we should say, "This is God"; or, "This comes from God." Imagine, therefore, now what a resplendently adorned, pure, and immovable palace of the Almighty must have been the most holy soul and the most pure body of the mother of God, in whose womb God the Word came to dwell, and abode in her by His Godhead with His most pure soul and body! Imagine what eternal, infinite, unchangeable holiness she is! Imagine of what reverence and glorification she is worthy! Imagine what we are: "A reed shaken with [the Devil's wind."[1] The Devil breathes his blasphemy into our hearts, and we are immediately shaken with it. We are disturbed, depressed, when we ought to despise all his blasphemies, or not pay any attention to them, looking upon them as an illusion.

I gaze upon the icons in the temple—upon Thy holy icon, my Lord, upon that of Thy most pure mother, those of the holy angels and archangels, and upon the faces of the saints,

[1] S. Matt. xi. 7.

adorned, resplendent with gold and silver—and think to myself how Thou hast honoured and adorned our nature, Creator and Provider of all! Thy saints shine with Thy light, they are sanctified by Thy grace, having conquered sin and washed away the sinful impurities of body and spirit; they are glorious with Thy glory, they are incorruptible through Thine incorruptibility. Glory to Thee for having so honoured, enlightened, and raised our nature! Here are Thine Apostles and hierarchs, living images of Thee, the Highest, Who passed through the heavens, Envoy of the Father, Hierarch and Chief of Shepherds; Thy goodness, Thy wisdom, Thy might, spiritual beauty, power, and holiness shine in them. Here are Thy martyrs, who by Thy strength overcame terrible temptations and endured fearful tortures; they have washed the garments of their souls white in Thy blood. Here are Thy venerable ones, who by fasting, vigilance, and prayer obtained Thy wonderful gifts, the gifts of healing, of discernment; Thy might strengthened them to stand above sin and all the snares of the Devil; Thy likeness shines forth in them like the sun.

We have icons in our houses, and venerate them, in order to show, amongst other things, that the eyes of God and of all the heavenly dwellers are constantly fixed upon us, and see not only all our acts, but also our words, thoughts, and desires.

As in the earthly life there are poor and rich, so also in the spiritual life, in the spiritual order, there are also poor and rich. As the poor ask charity of the rich and well-to-do, and cannot live without their help, so also in the spiritual order the poor must have recourse to the spiritually rich. We are the spiritually poor, whilst the saints, or those who shine even in this present life by their faith and piety, are the spiritually rich. It is to them that we needy ones must have recourse. We must beg for their prayers that they may help us to become simple as infants; that they may teach us spiritual wisdom, how to conquer sins, how to love God and our neighbour. And therefore pray for me, saints of God—prophets, apostles, martyrs, prelates, venerable and righteous men—that I may become like unto you!

What a close connection there is between the Church in heaven and the Church upon earth! What love the Church has! See! she unceasingly remembers, calls upon in prayer, and glorifies the Church in heaven for the great deeds accomplished on earth for God's sake; she unceasingly prays for the Church upon earth, and intercedes for the departed, in the hope of the resurrection, of the life eternal, and of union with God and the saints. Her love is immense, grand, divine! Let us enter into the spirit of this love of our mother, the Orthodox Church, and let us be penetrated with

the spirit of this love. Let us look upon all our brethren as our own members, upon ourselves and them as members of the one body of the Church, and let us love them actively, as ourselves; then we ourselves shall be living members of the Church in heaven, and she will be our active and speedy helper and intercessor.

There is a spiritual world: there is a communion of souls with those at a distance, and with the departed; they see and hear us, and here is an evident proof of this:—A woman, whose husband was ill and was lying in a room—at a distance of some four hundred miles from her, and who afterwards died—saw one evening the people who came to him, what he was doing, and heard the words that he spoke. Do not the saints see us in the same manner? Do not they hear our prayers in the same manner?

We ought to have the most lively spiritual union with the heavenly inhabitants, with all the saints, apostles, prophets, martyrs, prelates, venerable and righteous men, as they are all members of one single body, the Church of Christ, to which we sinners also belong, and the living Head of which is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. This is why we call upon them in prayer, converse with them, thank and praise them. It is urgently necessary for all Christians to be in union with them if they desire to make Christian progress; for the saints are our friends,

our guides to salvation, who pray and intercede for us.

What does the daily invocation of the saints signify—of different ones each day, during the whole year and during our whole lifetime? It signifies that God's saints, as our brethren, only perfect, live and are near us; that they hear us and are ever ready to help us, by the grace of God. We live together with them—in the one house of the Heavenly Father—only on its different halves. We live on the earthly, they on the heavenly half; but we both have a means of communication with each other: for us the prayer of faith and love, for them their spiritual nature, always ready for active help, owing to the love with which their souls are permeated.

You do not understand how the saints in Heaven can hear us when we pray to them. But how do the rays of the sun bend down from Heaven to us, lighting everything throughout the earth? The saints in the spiritual world are like the rays of the sun in the material world. God is the eternal, life-giving Sun, and the saints are the rays of this wise Sun. As the eyes of the Lord are constantly looking upon the earth and upon terrestrial beings, so also the eyes of the saints cannot but turn towards the same direction as the provident gaze of the Lord of all creatures towards where their treasures (their bodies, their works, the holy

places, and the persons devoted to them) are to be found. "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."[1] You know how quickly, how far, and how clearly the heart can see (especially the objects of the spiritual world); you notice this in all the sciences, especially in the spiritual ones, where a great deal is adopted by faith only (the vision of the heart). The heart is the eye of the human being. The purer it is, the quicker, farther and clearer it can see. But with God's saints this spiritual eye is refined, even during their lifetime, to the highest degree of purity possible for man, and after their death, when they have become united to God, through God's grace it becomes still clearer and wider in the limits of its vision. Therefore the saints see very clearly, widely, and far: they see our spiritual wants; they see and hear all those who call upon them with their whole hearts—that is, those whose mental eyes are fixed straight upon them, and are not darkened or dimmed when so fixed by unbelief and doubt; in other words, when the eyes of the heart of those who pray, so to say, meet the eyes of those they call upon. This is a mysterious vision. He who is experienced will understand what is meant. Therefore, how easy it is to communicate with the saints! It is only necessary to purify the eye of the heart, to fix it firmly upon a saint known to you, to pray to him for what you want,

[1] S. Matt. vi. 21.

and you will obtain it. And what is God in reference to sight? He is all sight, all light, and all knowledge. He everlastingly fills both Heaven and earth, and sees everything in every place. "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good."[1]

Lutherans say: "Why should we ask the prayers of the saints for ourselves? We pray to God Himself." But they contradict themselves, for why do they ask a pastor to pray for them? They might as well pray without a pastor if every one has an equal access to God, and we have no need of any sanctified suppliants. What blindness! They say that by praying to the saints we worship idols. This is untrue. We do not pray to any saint as we pray to God, we only ask his prayers for ourselves. Is there a shadow of idolatry in this? In the same manner as we ask God's living ministers and suppliants to pray to Him for us, so likewise we ask the heavenly suppliants, who, from their love to God, have great boldness before Him. Besides this, very many of them, even when they lived here on earth, were already suppliants and intercessors before God for the world; there, in heaven, this activity of theirs is only continued, has attained greater dimensions, and is especially powerful, because it is no longer hindered by the heavy and inert flesh. All the saints, though they have finished their earthly

[1] Prov. xv. 3.

course, are yet alive: "For He is not a God of the dead, but of the living; for all live unto Him."[1]

As by means of the electric telegraph we speedily communicate with persons who are far away from us, so likewise, by means of lively faith, as though through the telegraph wires, we speedily communicate with God, with the angels and saints. As we entirely trust to the speed of the electric current, and to its reaching its destination, so, likewise, we should completely trust to the speed of the prayer of faith and to its reaching its destination. Send your petition to God and the saints by means of the telegraph of faith, and you will speedily obtain an answer. The answering signs of a telegraph are simple, but only the experienced read them; the actions upon the heart of the God of all spirits, of all flesh and of the saints, are likewise simple; but only the experienced understand them.

Wherever a man goes, he always comes back home afterwards. So it is with the Christian, whoever he may be, whether he is a person of distinction or a simple one, rich or poor, learned or ignorant; wherever he may be, whatever station he may occupy in society, whatever he does, he must remember that he is not at home, but on a voyage, on the way, and that

[1] S. Luke xx. 38.

he must return home—to his father, mother, to his elder brothers and sisters; and that this home is heaven, his father—God; his mother—the most pure mother of the Lord; his elder brothers and sisters—the angels and saints of God; and he must also remember that all his earthly duties and works are artifical, whilst his real duties are the salvation of his soul, the fulfilment of Christ's commandments, the cleansing of his heart.

Some persons ask: What is the use of mentioning the names of the departed or offering prayer for them? God, being omniscient Himself, knows their names and the needs of each one. But those who speak thus forget, or do not know, the importance of prayer, do not know the importance of every word said from the whole heart; they forget that the justice and mercy of God are moved by our heartfelt prayer, which the Lord in His goodness imputes to the merit of the living or the departed themselves, as to the members of the one body of the Church. They do not know that also the "Church of the first-born, which are written in heaven,"[1] in her love, continually prays to God for us, and expressly mentions before God the names of those who pray for them—equal for equal. We make mention of their names, and they of ours. Whilst he who does not lovingly remember his brethren in prayer, will

[1] Heb. xii. 23.

not himself be remembered, and does not deserve to be mentioned. Even one word of faith and love means much in prayer. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."[1]

If I pray to God with hearty, lively, and perfect faith, then I am not only near Him, as a son living in the same house is to his father, but I am also near to all the heavenly powers, to all the saints, reigning in heaven; and they are no farther away from me than the icons before which I pray. Therefore it is an excellent custom with us to have in our houses icons of the Lord, of His most pure mother, of the archangels, guardian angels, and of the saints, and to pray before them: their nearness to our bodily sight betokens their still greater nearness to our spiritual sight, armed with undoubting faith. Nearness: "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth,"[2] just as in the parental house brothers rejoice when one of them, who had offended against his father, repents of the grief he has caused his father by his behaviour.

God and the saints hear us during our prayer as men hear each other when talking among themselves, or as people standing in church hear the preacher, or soldiers the voice of their commander, with the difference that God and the

[1] S. James v. 16. [2] S. Luke xv. 10.

saints hear our prayers incomparably better and more perfectly, because when we hear the words of an ordinary man we do not know what is in his heart and thoughts, and it may happen that a person says one thing whilst he has quite another thing in his heart.

We have within us a spiritual eye, with which we see a million times more than we are able to by means of our bodily sight, which is merely an instrument of our spiritual eye; a conductor through which the soul either thinks or recognises all things visible. What are the objects of contemplation for this spiritual world? Besides the visible world, there is God, an infinite Spirit, an infinite Mind, Who has created and creates all things in the material world, which is the realisation of His thoughts (ideas), and there is a spiritual world, angelic, innumerable, living in constant contemplation of the Godhead, and of all the works of His omnipotence and great wisdom. Our spiritual eye relates above all to the Lord, and in this case its functions are called contemplation and meditation on God: this contemplation and meditation on God can extend unto infinity, as God Himself is infinite, and have the property of cleansing the soul from sin, of perfecting it, and bringing it nearer and nearer to God, the source of our light, or of our thought and life. After this we contemplate the angelic orders according to the measure of God's revelation and their spiritual, light-bearing nature, their

spiritual goodness, their love for God, for each other, and for mankind, their guarding actions in relation to our earth, to its elements, to human communities, to holy and other places, and especially to every Christian. Besides this, the spiritual eye turns within to the man himself, and then its function is called self-examination, self-knowledge, self-introspection, spiritual watchfulness over our own thoughts and desires.

When we pray, then the ears of the Lord are inclined to our prayer. He is then, as in general He always is, as near to us as the icon, before which we stand, and even much nearer: He is close to our very heart. His presence near us is as manifest as the visible icon, and therefore the icon is only a visible representation of how near the Lord is to us, how He looks upon us and hears us. And God's saints, in the Holy Ghost, are also as near to us as the Holy Ghost is near to us, Who is everywhere present and filleth all things, "Whose house we are,"[1] and in the Holy Ghost they see and hear us in the same way as we see and hear people speaking to us. For the Holy Ghost is the medium, by which we see and hear even ordinary things.

[5] Heb. iii. 6; 1 Cor. iii. 16; vi. 19.

§ 2. Imitation of the Saints.

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus.—Heb. xii. 1.

How vividly God's saints represented God to themselves!—the saints who through the Holy Ghost compiled prayers for their own and our guidance. In what fear and trembling they stood before God in prayer, but also with what love and hope! Every word of their prayers says: "God is with us; and God within us hears each of our words, sees every thought, every wish, every tear."

All the saints in heaven and all true Christians upon earth are "one body and one spirit,"[1] this is why the prayer of believers is heard so easily and speedily and truly in heaven, and why there is so much hopefulness in calling upon the saints; but in order that our prayers should be always easily and speedily heard by the saints, we must have the same spirit as theirs, the spirit of faith and of love for God and our neighbour, the spirit of meekness, humility, abstinence, purity, and chastity, brave, valiant, thirsting after righteousness, the spirit of compassion, heavenly and not earthly.

[1] Eph. iv. 4.

The Lord is so holy, so simple in His holiness, that one single evil or impure thought deprives us of Him, of the sweet and most sweet, of the pure and most pure, peace and light of our souls. Hence it follows that the saints are all light; they are all one fragrance, like the light of the sun, like the purest air. Lord, grant this simple holiness to me also!

The holy angels and other heavenly powers are full of pure, holy life, of unbroken peace, of unchangeable vigour, of eternal courage and strength, of indescribable beauty, light, and wisdom, of the purest love for God and men, of mutual friendship, of Divine light and enlightenment: such are also our holy guardian angels. What a wonderful nature the angels have! But Christians who become worthy of attaining to the future life and to the resurrection from the dead will be equal to the angels, according to the word of the Lord Himself. Let us, then, zealously strive after that endless, unchangeable, undisturbed life.

Watch yourself continually, in order that the spiritual life and spiritual wisdom should not be dried up within you. Meditate oftener upon what you read, or sing, or hear in church, or sometimes at home. Live as the saints lived: by their prayers, wisdom, and virtues; in meekness, humility, and gentleness, not sparing yourself, but renouncing yourself, your rest,

ease and enjoyment, for the love of God and your neighbour, in patience, courage, and struggle—have their faith, hope, and love. "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when He will return from the wedding."[1]

God's saints are great through their spiritual disposition, through their faith, their firm trust in God, and their burning love to God, for Whose sake they despised all earthly things. Oh, how dull we are, compared to them; how unlike unto them! They are great by their great deeds of abstinence, vigilance, fasting, unceasing prayers, their diligence in studying the Word of God, and in pious meditation. Oh, how unlike we are to them! How deeply we must venerate them! With what reverence we must ask for their prayers for us! But in no case must we regard them lightly, irreverently, remembering their godliness and their union with the Godhead.

When your faith in the Lord, either during your life and prosperity, or in the time of sickness and at the moment of quitting this life, grows weak, grows dim from worldly vanity or through illness, and from the terrors and darkness of death, then look with the mental eyes of your heart upon the companies of our

[1] S. Luke xii. 35, 36.

forefathers, the patriarchs, prophets, and righteous ones—S. Simeon, who took the Lord up in his arms, Job, Anna the prophetess, and others; the Apostles, prelates, venerable fathers, martyrs, the disinterested, the righteous, and all the saints. See how, both during their earthly life and at the time of their departure from this life, they unceasingly looked to God and died in the hope of the resurrection and of the life eternal, and strive to imitate them. These living examples, which are so numerous, are capable of strengthening the wavering faith of every Christian in the Lord and in the future life. Those Christian communities who do not venerate the saints and do not call upon them in prayer lose much in piety and in Christian hope. They deprive themselves of the great strengthening of their faith by the examples of men like unto themselves.

A Christian ought to meditate upon things above, upon heaven, where Christ is, and not to cling to the corruptible blessings of the world: this is the concern of the heathen. But meanwhile we attach ourselves passionately to all earthly pleasures and things. We have perverted our life by withdrawing ourselves from the example set us by the Lord, the Apostles, martyrs, reverend fathers, the unmercenary, and all the saints. They were not of this world, but we are of this world; we lead a life according to our own conception, but not a

Christian life. Envy, pride, condemnation of others, enmity, hatred, malice, iniquities, carnal impurity, are not banished from our hearts, but are firmly and widely implanted in them.

He who prays to the Lord, to the mother of God, to the angels and saints, must first of all endeavour to amend his heart, and his life, and afterwards to imitate Them, as it is written: "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful."[1] "Be ye holy; for I am holy."[2] Those who pray to the mother of God must imitate her humility, her unimaginable purity, submission to the will of God (for instance, when you see injustice), and her patience; those who pray to the angels must think of the higher life, and strive for spirituality, gradually laying aside all fleshliness and carnal passions, striving also after ardent love for God, and their neighbour; let those who pray to the saints imitate them in their love for God, and their contempt of the world or its vain blessings, their prayers, abstinence, disinterestedness, patience in sickness, sorrows, and misfortunes, their love for their neighbour. Otherwise, the prayers will be as useless as beating the air.

Thou alone knowest the cares, labours, and sweat of Thy saints, in order to purify themselves to please Thee, the Father of all. Thou alone knowest Thy saints. Teach us to imitate

[1] S. Luke vi. 36. [2] 1 S. Peter i. 16.

them in our lives, so that we too may be in union with all, through love.

§ 3. Death and Eternity.

It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.—Heb. ix. 27.

Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him, but God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit—1 Cor. ii. 9, 10.

A terrible truth. Impenitent sinners after their death lose every possibility of changing for good, and therefore remain unalterably given up to everlasting torments (for sin cannot but torment). How is this proved? It is plainly proved by the actual state of some sinners and by the nature of sin itself—to keep the man its prisoner and to close every outlet to him. Who does not know how difficult it is, without God's special grace, for a sinner to turn from the way of sin, that is so dear to him, into the path of virtue? How deeply sin takes root in the heart of the sinner, and in all his being; how it gives the sinner its own way of looking at things, by means of which he sees them quite differently to what they are in reality, and shows him everything in a kind of alluring light. It is for this reason that

we see that sinners very often do not even think of their conversion, and do not consider themselves to be great sinners, because their eyes are blinded by their self-love and pride. And if they do consider themselves sinners, then they give themselves up to the most terrible despair, which overwhelms their minds with thick darkness and greatly hardens their heart. But for the grace of God, what sinner would have returned to God? For it is the nature of sin to darken our souls, to bind us hand and foot. But the time and place for the action of grace is here alone: after death there remain only the prayers of the Church, and these prayers can be efficacious for penitent sinners alone—that is, only for those who have developed in their souls the capability of receiving God's mercy or of benefiting by the prayers of the Church—that is, the light of the good works which they have taken with them out of this life. Impenitent sinners are undoubtedly sons of perdition. What does my experience tell me when I am the prisoner of sin? I am tormented sometimes the whole day, and cannot turn to God with my whole heart, because sin hardens my heart, making God's mercy inaccessible to me. I burn in the fire, and willingly remain in it, because sin has bound my powers, and I—like one inwardly chained—am unable to turn to God until He, seeing my helplessness, my humility, and my tears, takes pity on me and bestows His grace upon me. It is not without reason that a man given over to

sin is spoken of as "delivered into chains of darkness." [1]

What is most terrible to man? Death? Yes, death. None of us can imagine, without terror, how he will have to die and breathe his last sigh. And how parents grieve when their beloved children die, when they lie breathless before their eyes! But, brethren, do not fear, and do not grieve beyond measure. By His death Jesus Christ our Saviour has conquered our death, and by His resurrection He has laid the foundation for our resurrection, and every week, every Sunday, we solemnise in the risen Christ our common future resurrection from the dead, and begin beforehand the life eternal, to which our present temporal life is but a short, narrow, and most sorrowful way. For a true Christian death is merely like a sleep until the day of resurrection, or like birth into a new life. And thus in solemnising every week the resurrection of Christ and our own resurrection from the dead, let us learn to continually die to sin, and to rise with our souls from dead works, to enrich ourselves with virtues, and not sorrow inconsolably for the dead. Let us learn to meet death without dread, as the decree of the Heavenly Father, which, through the resurrection of Christ from the dead, has lost its terror.

Sometimes in the affliction of your soul you

[1] 2 Peter ii. 4.

wish to die. It is easy to die, and does not take long; but are you prepared for death? Remember that after death the judgment of your whole life will follow.[1] You are not prepared for death, and if it were to come to you, you would shudder all over. Therefore do not waste words in vain. Do not say: "It is better for me to die," but say rather, "How can I prepare for death in a Christian manner?" By means of faith, by means of good works, and by bravely bearing the miseries and sorrows that happen to you, so as to be able to meet death fearlessly, peacefully, and without shame, not as a rigorous law of nature, but as a fatherly call of the eternal, heavenly, holy, and blessed Father unto the everlasting Kingdom. Remember the old man who, being weary of his heavy burden, called for death. When it came he did not wish to die, and preferred to go on carrying his heavy burden.

Brethren! amongst the beings created by God, there are the temporal, transitory ones, such as all unintelligent, animate and inanimate creatures, organic and inorganic, as well as the world itself, which will pass away; "for the fashion of this world passeth away."[2] And there are eternal beings, which are not transitory, such as the angels and the souls of men, the demons themselves with Satan. For man, the earthly life, life in the body, serves only

[1] Heb. ix. 27. [2] 1 Cor. vii. 31.

as a preparation for eternal life, which will begin after the death of the body. Therefore we must avail ourselves without delay of the present life as a preparation for the other life; and as we chiefly work during week-days for the earthly life, we must work on Sundays and other Holy-Days wholly for the Lord God, devoting them to attendance at Divine service, to reading the Word of God, to pious meditation, to edifying conversations, good works, and especially to works of mercy. Those sin grievously who neglect the matter of their spiritual education for eternal life in the world above. How can we forget our final destination? How is it possible to be so ungrateful to the Creator, Who created us after His own image and likeness, incorruptible, and for union with Himself; Who redeemed us by His cross, and opened to us the gates of the Kingdom of Heaven? How can many of us become "like the beasts that perish"?[1] "Let us lift up our hearts!"[2]

The degrees of beatitude and torment in the next world will be different. This is proved by the present state of the souls of different people or of the same man at different times under different conditions. The more simple, the better and more sociable the man is, the more blessed he inwardly is; the more deceitful, evil, and selfish he is, the more unhappy; the

[1] Psalm xlix. 20.

[2] Exclamation at the Liturgy.

firmer his faith and the stronger his love are, the more blessed he is; the weaker his faith and love are, the weaker, the worse he feels. Thus those who have little or no faith, those who hate their fellow-creatures, are the most unhappy of men. By this we can understand what future torments will be.

God grant that, even after death, our brotherly union with our departed relatives, and those whom we knew in this life, may not be broken off, that our love may not be extinguished, but may burn with a bright flame, and that constant true remembrance of those at rest may ever remain with us until our death. "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you."[1]

"The unspeakable bliss of them that behold the infinite goodness of Thy countenance."[2] Earthly bliss all passes away by itself, and also through vicissitudes of human life; whilst joys of heavenly bliss will never end—will be infinite. Is it not worth while, therefore, to despise all the enjoyments of this transitory world, and of this still more fleeting life, in order to strive with the whole heart after spiritual and unchangeable joys?

In the future life our bliss will be increased

[1] S. Mark iv. 24; S. Matt. vii. 2.

[2] From the Russian Orthodox Church morning prayer of S. Basil the Great.

by wonder—to suddenly see the saints and beautiful angels of the Lord, their numberless myriads, their symmetrical ranks, their hierarchical order—by the wonder of seeing all the saints, all the good and simple men of God of all ages: the prophets, apostles, and all others, and above all by the contemplation of God Himself in inaccessible light; by our own inward enlightenment and most perfect beatitude, undarkened by any sin, fear, care, or sorrow.

Ought not the Christian, who looks for eternal peace and joy in heaven, to courageously and joyfully bear all sorrows, labour, sickness, and injustices, all sufferings, all unpleasantnesses? In truth he ought. Otherwise, what would be the meaning of future rest and peace? What peace and rest shall there be for him who has already had peace and rest here, without enduring anything? Where would God's justice be? "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."[1]

All present things are but a shadow of the future. The present light is a shadow of the future ineffable light. Earthly bliss is a faint shadow of future unspeakable, eternal bliss; fire a faint shadow of the fire of Gehenna, which will burn sinners unto ages of ages; pure earthly joy a shadow of unspeakable future joys; the magnificent royal palaces a faint shadow of the resplendent mansions of Paradise prepared for

[1] Acts xiv. 22.

those who love God and fulfil his commandments. The glorious attire of the sons and daughters of men cannot be compared with that glorious garment with which the elect shall be clothed, for they will put on Christ. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father," [1] according to the Saviour's sure promise.

Now we seek lasting bliss, and do not find it. The pleasures which we invent are not lasting; they are false, vain, and of short duration; but if the Christian walks worthy of his vocation, [2] then he shall obtain as an inheritance a bliss which is true and lasting, and which shall completely satisfy the requirements of his soul.

What blessings Thy chosen ones will enjoy in heaven with Thee, O Lord! How wearisome to the heart are all earthly delights! How destructive to the heart is even a momentary attachment to anything earthly! And what peace, what freedom, what width, what light, what joy is to be found in Thee!

[1] S. Matt. xiii. 43. [2] Eph. iv. 1.

§ 4. Union with God.

If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him.—S. John xiv. 23.

The problem of our life is union with God, and sin completely prevents this; therefore flee from sin as from a terrible enemy, as from the destroyer of the soul, because to be without God is death and not life. Let us therefore understand our destination; let us always remember that our common Master calls us to union with Himself.

Be so sure of the Lord's nearness to you that you may feel when praying to God that you touch Him, not only with your thought and heart, but also with your mouth and tongue. "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart;"[1] that is God.

What is the sign that a Christian man is near to Christ? The man who is near to Christ often turns with faith and love to Christ; often pronounces His sweetest name; often calls upon Him for help; often turns his eyes, thoughts, and heart towards Him. Christ the Lord naturally reveals Himself upon his lips and in his glance, because without Christ he is

[1] Rom. x. 8.

powerless, joyless. The man who is far from Christ seldom, very seldom, turns his thoughts towards Christ, and even then not with hearty faith and love, but only through some necessity, and as to a Person Who is little known to him, Who does not rejoice him, does not delight his heart, and Who has no attraction for him. This is why we see that those who are near to Christ do not let Christ out of their thoughts and heart; they live in Him; He is their breath, food, drink, dwelling—everything. Through the sweetness of His name and His beneficial touch they, so to say, cleave to Him with their whole being: "My soul hangeth upon Thee."[1] And in this cleaving they find unspeakable bliss, which the world does not know. Such are the signs by which it may be recognised who has found Christ, and who has not yet found Him. Those who have not found Christ live in this life without hearty faith; they think and care more about worldly things—how to enjoy themselves, how to eat and drink pleasurably, how to dress exquisitely, how to satisfy their carnal desires, how to kill time, with which they do not know what to do, though time seeks them and, not finding them, quickly flies away before their eyes. Day flies away after day, night after night, month after month, year after year, until, finally, the last terrible hour strikes, and they hear a voice: "Stop, the course is finished; your time has been lost; your sins

[1] Psalm lxiii. 9.

and iniquities have preceded you; they will fall upon you with all their power, and will crush you with their weight eternally."

That our union with God in the future world will come to pass, and that it will be for us the source of light, peace, joy, and beatitude, this we partly recognise by experience even in the present life. During prayer, when our soul is wholly turned towards God, and is united to Him, we feel happy, calm, easy, and joyful, like children resting on their mother's breast; or, I would rather say, we experience a sensation of inexpressible well-being. "It is good for us to be here."[1] Therefore struggle unremittingly to obtain future everlasting bliss, the beginning of which you know by experience even in the present life; but bear in mind that these beginnings are only earthly, imperfect, which we see now only in part, as "through a glass darkly."[2] How will it be with us then, when we shall indeed be *most truly* united to God, when the images and shadows shall pass away, and the kingdom of truth and vision will come? Oh! we must labour unceasingly all our life, until death, for future blessedness, for our future union with God.

Remember that you are always walking in the presence of the sweetest Lord Jesus. Say to yourself oftener: "I wish so to live that my life

[1] S. Luke ix. 33. [2] 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

may gladden my Beloved, crucified for my sake on the Cross. Above all, I will take for the companion and friend of my life my Holy Beloved, Who instils everything into my heart, making me thirst for the salvation of all, rejoicing with those who rejoice, and weeping with those who weep." This will especially comfort my Comforter, Christ.

Brethren! prepare yourselves for union with God. Give up earthly vanity. Apply yourselves to the great work of self-purification and self-improvement. Love to progress in faith and virtue, and not to progress in the things of this world. Even here on earth we prepare ourselves to see there in eternity the Maker of every visible and invisible creature, the Beauty of all.

In order that you should have steadfast assurance during prayer, of receiving every spiritual blessing from the Lord, believe that by uniting yourself unto the Lord during your prayer you become one spirit with Him,[1] and that God is most gracious, almighty, and most wise. He is all-perfect perfection, therefore you, too, according to your receptivity, according to your faith and love, will become a partaker of His Divine perfections. In the union of your soul with God, do not consider anything impossible or difficult of fulfilment, "for with God all things are possible"[2]—not only the things which you can

[1] Cor. vi. 17. [2] S. Mark x. 27.

think of, or are thinking of, but also those which you cannot think of, or which you think of as impossible, for God is an infinite Being, and all His perfections are infinite.

The invisible, all-pervading God often and sensibly touches my invisible soul, which, from this touch, enjoys wonderful rest and heavenly joy. It is not the eyes which give me tidings of my God (ordinary feelings are destined for the lower objects of creation), not the hearing by means of words or sounds of the voice that carries to me the message of the Incomprehensible, but the soul itself becomes, so to say, dissolved in God.

You have felt in your heart during prayer, or during the reading of the Word of God and other holy books (and sometimes even during the reading of worldly ones of well-intentioned contents, in which, for instance, some event representing the action of God's Providence upon men is described), or during edifying conversation, "a still small voice," as though a current of electricity was passing through your body. It is the Lord visiting you. "A still small voice" [1] —and the Lord is in it.

The object of our life is union with God: in this life by faith, hope and love, and in the future one by all-perfect love. But see how the

[1] 1 Kings xix. 12.

enemy and we ourselves here distort this object. We unite ourselves in our hearts with various things, in accordance with the diversity of our passionate attachments. Sometimes—oh, horror! —our love is fixed upon silver, upon food, drink, dress, dwelling, furniture, upon men like unto ourselves, until we forget God. Sometimes we are proud, we envy, hate, lie, and then we unite ourselves directly with the Devil himself, who is malice, falsehood, pride, envy personified—and how we thus insult our Master, Who created us after His image and likeness; how we distort this divinely drawn image, drawn from God Himself! But we think of this too little, are too ignorant of that which is the most essential matter to us—our union with God.

As your thought is near to you, as your faith is near to you, so near is God to you, and the more lively and steadfast is your thought about God, the more lively your faith, and the recognition of your infirmity and nothingness, and the feeling of your need of God, the nearer will God be to you. Or, as air is near to your body, so near is God to you. For God is, so to say, the mental air, by means of which breathe all the angels, the souls of the saints and of living men, especially of pious ones. You cannot live for a single moment without God, and you actually live each moment in Him: "For in Him we live, and move and have our being."[1]

[1] Acts xvii. 28.

If you have Christian love for your neighbour, then all heaven will love you; if you have union of spirit with your fellow-creatures, then you shall have union with God and all the dwellers of heaven; if you are merciful to your neighbour, then God and all the angels and saints will be merciful to you; if you pray for others, then all heaven will intercede for you. The Lord our God is holy; be so yourself also.

Live with your heart the words of the Saviour's prayer to His Father: "As Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us,"[1] and strive by every means to become united to God yourself, and to unite others to Him. Maintain by every means mutual, pious union, not sparing either yourself or anything belonging to you, for the sake of maintaining the union of love. For God is our almighty life-giver, and the all-merciful giver of all things. He will support our life in our labours for our neighbour's benefit, if necessary, and will give us everything needful, if we spend our property for the sake of maintaining mutual love.

Nothing is nearer to us than God. He is the God of hearts, of the very hearts, and the heart, in its turn, is nearer than anything to us. It is the whole man, "the hidden man of the heart,"[2] as the Apostle says.

God is an abyss of all blessings, of omnisci-

[1] S. John xvii. 21. [2] 1 S. Peter iii. 4.

ence, great wisdom, omnipotence, grace, mercy, righteousness, and unchangeableness in good, but "He that is joined unto the Lord," through the prayer of faith and the works of love, "is one spirit,"[1] with the Lord, and therefore he is filled, according to the measure of his faith and love, with wisdom and spiritual power; he receives from Him, as from the true goodness, everything leading to salvation, and himself becomes merciful and compassionate to others, and is filled with spiritual wisdom, firmness, and unchangeableness in faith and virtue. Thus, as God is the everflowing source, we have only to be united to Him by lively faith and love unfeigned in order to be filled by Him with every spiritual blessing. Such union is possible always, and in every place, if only our hearts are ever with Him, and not with the Devil and the vanity of this world. This is why amongst righteous men we often find seers and prophets working miracles of Divine omnipotence, love, and mercy; steadfast, unchangeable in virtue unto the laying down of their lives for the faith, out of love to God, and filled with the spiritual wisdom of the saints, "for the Lord their God is holy."[2]

Now we stand up and fall (in faith and virtue), but we hope for a time and condition when we shall no longer be able to fall, when we shall reach such a state of perfect safety from falling, as the angels have attained to, who are now

[1] 1 Cor. vi. 17. [2] Psalm xcix. 9.

inaccessible to evil, and when we shall become strengthened in holiness. In the meantime fight against sin, and hope that the time will at last come of perfect victory over sin and over death, which is its offspring. "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."[1]

My God! how the love and sincere sympathy of our neighbour towards us rejoices our hearts! Who shall describe this blessedness of the heart, penetrated with the feeling of others' love towards me, and my love to others? It is indescribable! If here on earth mutual love so rejoices us, then with what sweetness of love shall we be filled in heaven, when we shall dwell with God, with the mother of God, with the heavenly powers, with God's saints? Who can imagine and describe such bliss, and what earthly temporal things should we not sacrifice in order to obtain the unutterable bliss of heavenly love? God, Thy name is Love! Teach me true love, strong as death. I have most plenteously tasted its sweetness from my communion in the spirit of faith, in Thee, with Thy faithful servants, and have obtained plenteousness of peace and life through it. Strengthen, O God, that which Thou hast created in me. Oh, had it ever been thus all the days of my life! Grant that I may oftener be in the communion of faith and love with Thy faithful servants, with Thy temples, with Thy Church, with Thy members!

[1] *1 Cor. xv. 26.*

My infinite blessedness, Lord Jesus Christ, of what blessings hast Thou not made me a partaker during my temporal existence! I thank Thee, my Mercy, my Blessedness. But if earthly blessings are so numerous, so various, so sweet —then what must heavenly, spiritual blessings be: they are more truly infinite, numberless, unimaginably sweet. Do not deprive me, then, most merciful and most gracious Lord, of these Thy heavenly blessings too, which Thou hast prepared for those who love Thee. Do not deprive others of them either! Grant that they may all know Thee, our Blessedness! For Thou art our Blessedness everywhere, upon earth, too, for every blessing is Thy work! And besides this, grant, Lord, that I may also submissively bear the afflictions of this life: they are necessary for my passionate flesh, for my old man. Lover of men! teach the rest of Thy people also to bear them submissively, and grant that they may learn the need of them. "Patient in tribulation."[1] "In the world ye shall have tribulation."[2]

[1] Rom. xii. 12. [2] S. John xvi. 33.

SURSUM CORDA. A Handbook of Intercession and Thanksgiving, arranged by the Rev. W. H. FRERE, M.A., and AGNES L. ILLINGWORTH. With a Preface by the Bishop of Rochester. Demy 18mo., 316 pp. Cloth boards, 2*s.* net; cloth limp, 1*s.* 6*d.* net.

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS: Introductory Instruction upon Intercession and Thanksgiving; A Kalendar; A scheme of Intercession for every day of the week; A scheme of Thanksgiving for every day of the week: Prayers for special occasions and objects; Prayers for Communities and Societies; Collects from the Prayer Book; A Horology.

THAT LAND AND THIS. A Series of Allegories for the Seasons of the Christian Year. By GERTRUDE HOLLIS. With a Preface by the Rev. G. BODY, D.D., Canon of Durham. 12mo., 144 pp. Cloth, 2*s.*

CONTENTS:—*Advent*, Cyril's First Confession; *Christmas*, The Birthday Gifts; *Epiphany*, Ursula Lindemann's Epiphany; *Lent*, Thy Will, O, GOD; *Easter*, My Easter Communion; *Ascension-tide*, The LORD's Callers; *Whitsuntide*, His Vocation and Ministry; *Trinity Sunday*, The School of the Soul; *Feasts of the B. V. Mary*, The Star of Bethlehem; *S. Michael and All Angels*, Sent forth to Minister; *All Saints*, The Saints of GOD.

EXPOSITIONS OF CATHOLIC DOCTRINE. Concerning The Church. The Incarnation, and the Sacraments. By the Rev. VERNON STALEY. Cheaper Edition. Cloth, 2*s.*

SUMMARY OF CONTENTS:—**The Church**—The Church, The Covenanted Sphere—The Body and the Soul of the Church—Loss or Gain?—The Reunion of the Church. **The Incarnation**—The Divine Person of the Incarnate SON—The Son of Adam—The Extension of the Incarnate Life—The Title 'Mother of GOD.' **The Sacraments**—The Number of the Sacraments—The Holy Eucharist, the Supreme Act of Christian Worship—The Sacrifice of the Church—Absolution.

A. R. MOWBRAY & CO., OXFORD AND LONDON.

OUT OF THE BODY. Of the various states of Souls awaiting the Resurrection. By a Member of the Guild of All Souls. With a Preface by the Rev. J. P. F. DAVIDSON, M.A., President of the Guild of All Souls. Imp. 32mo., 48 pp. Cloth, 1*s.*

CONTENTS: Introduction; The Hopeless State; The State of Purification; The Blessed State.

SUPPLICATIONS, PRAYERS, INTERCESSIONS, AND THANKSGIVINGS, FOR THE USE OF CHURCH WATCHERS AND CHURCH WORKERS. Edited with a Preface, by the Rev. N. KEYMER, M.A., Rector of Headon, and a Canon Missioner in the Diocese of Southwell. **Smaller Edition for the pocket:** cloth, 1*s.* net. **Large Type Edition:** paper, 1*s.* 6*d.*; cloth, 2*s.*; interleaved, 3*s.*

THE SANCTUS BELL. An Altar Book of Special Intentions for the use of Communicants. By the Author of "Supplications, Prayers, Intercessions, and Thanksgivings." Edited with a Preface, by the Rev. N. KEYMER, M.A., Rector of Headon, and a Canon Missioner in the Diocese of Southwell. Imperial 32mo., 370 pp. Red borders, cloth boards, 3*s.* 6*d.*

"Will appeal to devout Communicants."—*Guardian.*
"Extremely valuable."—*Church Times.*
"A most valuable aid to devotion."—*Church Review.*

THE HOLY EUCHARIST IN TYPE AND SHADOW. By the Rev. NATHANIEL KEYMER, M.A., Rector of Headon, and a Canon Missioner in the Diocese of Southwell. Fcap 8vo., 100 pp. 1*s.* 6*d.* net.

"These Addresses are based on the thought expressed by S. Augustine, 'The ancient sacrifices of holy men were manifold and various signs of this true Sacrifice,' and Canon KEYMER elicits with skill and profit the mystical meaning of such offerings as those of Noah, Melchisedek, and Abraham, and the Sacrifices appointed under the old law. Priests who have frequently to address communicants' meetings and guilds will be able to gain many a useful suggestion from these pages."—*Church Times.*

A. R. MOWBRAY & CO., OXFORD AND LONDON.

84940

241.54
Se 66t